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WHAT BRINGS YOU PLEASURE?  
THE ROLE OF DESIRE WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPULSIVE  
PURCHASING

by

Justine M. Rapp

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
  
Major: Interdepartmental Area of Business (Marketing)

Under the Supervision of Professor James W. Gentry

Lincoln, Nebraska

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WHAT BRINGS YOU PLEASURE?  
THE ROLE OF DESIRE WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPULSIVE  
PURCHASING

Justine M. Rapp, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2012

Adviser: James W. Gentry

This paper seeks to put forth two major contributions into marketing scholarship: (1) the role of desire within the development of compulsivity from impulsive consumptions, and (2) an assessment of compulsivity measurement scales. A mixed method design provides for both statistical and qualitative support for both contributions, for a deeper and replicated account of consumer behavior within the marketplace. First, we develop a possible path for the development of compulsivity, explaining impulsivity as an antecedent with consumer shopping desire as the driving factor. With this, we introduce the variable Consumer Shopping Desire as a quantified construct related to Belk et al.'s (2003) conceptualization of consumer desire. Further, analysis is provided in seeking the differences in compulsivity measurement through an analysis of both the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) and Ridgway et al. (2008) compulsivity scales. Qualitative in-depth interviews illustrate leniency within the latter scale, as some individuals deemed compulsive fail to exhibit behaviors characteristic of compulsivity within the literature. We conclude with possible directions for the marketing community addressing the fundamental need in identifying at-risk consumers before they proceed to develop compulsive behaviors within the marketplace.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION

*“Addiction is a process of buying into false and empty promises: the promise of relief, the promise of emotional security, the false sense of fulfillment, and the false sense of intimacy with the world...Finding emotional fulfillment through an object or event is an illusion.”*

– Craig Nakken

Both impulsive and compulsive consumption are pervasive issues affecting consumers and their overall well-being. The impulsive consumption literature spans several academic disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and economics (Ainslie 1975; Davis and Havighurst 1946; Strotz 1956, respectively). Assessment of impulsive behaviors reached the consumer behavior literature through the evaluation of shopping behaviors and consumption impulses and is most generically defined as a “sudden and spontaneous desire” to purchase and/or consume a product (Rook and Hoch 1985, 23). Compulsive consumption, on the other hand, is defined as a repeated act that is both focused on the experience of consuming within the shopping environment and brings detriment to the consumer (Schlosser et al. 1994).

Despite extensive research on both impulsive and compulsive consumption, there is an apparent gap in the literature connecting the two constructs. Each phenomenon is studied in the extant literature as an independent force dictating consumer actions; however, no link has been established between the two. The absence of such investigation is surprising, as literature in the area has pointed to the potentially destructive nature of impulsive consumption behaviors (see Hirschmann 1992). With the additional acknowledgment that discount shopping risks addictive attachments (D’Innocenzio 2012), the connection to compulsive consumption seem all too clear. The development and recognition of such a relationship would provide for a richer



understanding of compulsivity development, leading more significantly to insights on prevention or intervention. While it is not the ultimate goal to prevent individuals from participating in consumptive behaviors, we aim to decipher the intricacies of risky behavior in hopes of curtailing potentially extreme and harmful shopping behaviors.

Accordingly, this paper intends to investigate a possible causal link between impulsive and compulsive buying behavior. Beginning with a theoretical examination of both consumption behaviors, I will establish the differences and similarities between the two concepts. Next, I will present and discuss a developmental model to illustrate a consumer's possible transition progressing from impulsive to compulsive purchasing, with a focus on a consumer's shopping desire. As such, the Compulsive Consumption Development Model intends to reveal a stage-wise sequence through which a consumer progresses towards compulsive consumption mediated by increases in desire within the shopping experience.

A mixed methods design is utilized herein to grasp a holistic understanding of the behavioral changes at play within this transition. After theoretical model development and hypothesis construction, the model is tested both quantitatively and qualitatively. A sample of 305 undergraduate students is used to assess statistical relationships between hypothesized pathways, while 28 concurrent qualitative interviews seek to understand the personal developmental experience of compulsivity and the validity of current measurement scales. Findings and insights uncovered through this mixed method approach are then subsequently followed by an adjusted large-scale quantitative study of 587 consumers to both confirm and replicate previous findings. Implications to the marketing and addiction domain are subsequently discussed.

## **IMPORTANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH**

Addiction has always been a part of my life. I grew up with an uncle who was a full blown alcoholic since age 18 and, as time went on, progressively dove deeper into the world of substance abuse. I experienced the pain and hardship of drug abuse from an early age, as my family was unable to rescue his children from the abuse, and as my grandmother slowly lost her most meaningful jewelry to theft in order for him to pay for the high cost of drug addiction. My uncle, and our family, hit rock bottom one August during a family vacation in Florida; my uncle miscalculated the amount of heroin needed to survive the week and fell into the despair of the darkest withdrawal. Witnessing my uncle in such a horrid state and having to watch my family put him on a plane to go to rehab is one of my most vivid memories. Now, my uncle is gripping onto life. He is homeless somewhere in Florida, with a failing liver and severe emphysema, continually in and out of prison. Worst of all, my cousins have nothing.

As I sit here at 26 years old in a PhD program, my heart breaks for them. How is it that I can be so fortunate, with such wonderful parents and such a thriving support system, yet those so close to me were given such pain? It is from this experience that I have vowed to commit my life's work to making a difference for those struggling; to give back and help those who have had no choice. Although this dissertation is set within the context of compulsive shopping behaviors, the lessons and contributions herein spread far into the vast realm of addictive behaviors.

The most significant contributions of this research are to (1) better understand the addictive process as developed from impulsive behaviors, (2) conceptualize and develop a measurement system for the role of desire within the addictive process, and (3) gain a

clear understanding of the differences and/or similarities present within the two primary means of compulsivity measurement. To start with the first objective, there is great debate within the addiction literature as to what addiction really is. Theories of addiction abound. From the biological model focusing on aspects of genetics and predispositions (Kalivas 2003) to the psychological model focusing on one's personal relationships and learned behaviors (see Stanton et al. 1978), addiction scholars are continually on the hunt to find exactly how addiction begins and, thus, how it can be stopped. The conceptualization herein, proposes an additional model citing impulsivity as a driver of compulsive behaviors. While it is recognized that this theory is not attributable to every case of addiction, strong support for the proposed model is showcased within this dissertation. Such findings meaningfully contribute to the addiction domain, as the development and recognition of behavioral addictions have gained significant attention in recent years.

Secondly, the conceptualization and measurement of desire within the addiction domain is a poorly understood and substantially under-researched construct. While significant research on craving does exist within the literature, the drivers of such cravings are minimally discussed. Although it is understood that desires lead to craving (Rosenberg 2009; Sayette et al. 2000), desire is never formally conceptualized in this context. Most quantitative assessments of craving are based on self-report data (Sayette et al. 2000), simply asking study participants, "How much do you desire X?". What does desire really mean? Do people experience desire in the same way, or in the same relative amounts? How can we, as researchers, really understand what craving is if we fail to understand what's driving it? There fails to exist any formalized measurement procedures

surrounding the understanding of consumer craving and desire within the marketplace; rather, it is assumed that consumers have an implicit understanding of their personal desire and can attest to felt experiences.

Accordingly, it is the second function of this dissertation to conceptualize desire as a driver within the marketplace, as well as within the addiction process. This gap within the literature is one that must be addressed as desires and craving alike are known drivers of consumptive behaviors. Through a deeper and clearer understanding of consumer desires, scholars will more easily be able to understand the processes related to developing consumer wants and needs. The analysis of desire herein takes an iterative approach over many studies. As will be seen, desire is first observed from a two-pronged perspective – object-focused and experienced-focused – and is constructed as a composite variable that exists at different parts of the shopping experience. As addiction is occasionally classified as ‘excessive desire’ (Keane 2004), we investigate desire to more deeply understand both the shopping experience and the learned process of addictive behaviors.

Third, multiple measures of compulsivity persist within the marketing domain. While a scale developed in 1992 by Faber and O’Guinn has garnered greater attention in scholarly work, a more recent scale by Ridgway et al. (2008) purports a more accurate conceptualization and measurement of the construct. As such, an additional goal of this dissertation work is to provide a qualitative assessment of both scales in a further effort to identify the most accurate means of compulsivity measurement. These findings will help provide the marketing community with a qualitative understanding of the individuals identified through both measurement models with the ultimate goal of matching

qualitative inquiry with both extant conceptualization and scale development procedures of compulsive buying behavior. We aim to assess the potential differences between scale strength (e.g., validity and consistency) and accurate identification (i.e., cut-off point of compulsivity identification).

Such findings aid both the marketing domain, as well as the social sciences.

Understanding desire as a key component of one's behavior provides for a more accurate account of consumers' inherent motivations allowing both scholars and practitioners to be more capable of assessing how consumers respond to marketplace factors (e.g., servicescape design, sales promotions and placement). Armed with such knowledge, detection of dangerous (or potentially dangerous) behaviors will provide for better protection of individuals in the beginning or on the verge of behavioral addiction.

Protecting individuals from the destructive consequences of addiction is one of the most timely and significant goals within addiction scholarship. The dissertation provides for a fresh perspective of the development of compulsive behaviors and the distinctive role of desire.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND HYPOTHESES

### IMPULSIVE CONSUMPTION

An extensive amount of research has been conducted in the attempt to understand and evaluate impulsive behaviors in individuals. Freud (1911, 1920) associated impulsive actions with the internal opposition of pleasure and reality, while more modern day psychologists assess impulsiveness as related to spontaneous actions (Eysenck et al. 1985) and a need for stimulation (Gerbing, Ahadi, and Patton 1987; Weun, Jones, and Beatty 1998). While there remain several minute differences between academic interpretations, a general understanding of impulsive behavior remains the same. As defined by Goldenson (1984, 37), an impulse is “a strong, sometimes *irresistible* urge: a *sudden* inclination to act without deliberation” (emphasis added by the author).

For the purposes of this paper, it is necessary to point out several key attributes in the aforementioned definition. First, an impulsive act is defined around the context of a single occurrence at a specific point in time; a notion that will be carried throughout this paper. Second, an impulse occurs suddenly, without any planning or foresight. Finally, such behavior is defined as irresistible. The effects of this final attribute will be discussed at length further in the paper through an analysis of both desire and self-control. The Compulsive Consumption Development Model argues that, through incremental increases and decreases of desire and self-control, respectively, the consumer is enraptured by their impulses and, thus, progresses towards more destructive behaviors.

Within the marketing literature, a substantial amount of regard has been given to research surrounding impulsive buying behaviors (Bellenger et al. 1978; Kacen and Lee 2002; Piron 1991; Weinberg and Gottwald 1982; Weun et al. 1998). Rook and Hoch (1985) revived scholarship on impulsiveness by identifying five main criteria that determine the differences between a consumer with an impulsive trait and one without, illustrated as (1) sudden and spontaneous desire to act, (2) psychological disequilibrium, (3) psychological conflict and struggle, (4) cognitive evaluation, and (5) a lack of regard for the consequences. Two years later, Rook (1987, 191) stated impulsive buying occurs “when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately... [one that is] hedonically complex...and prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences.” As is seen, this definition mimics that of Goldenson’s described previously, with two important alterations. One important addition is the recognition that such behavior is hedonically complex, meaning the consumer derives a sense of internal pleasure from the behavior. Most often, impulsive behaviors are driven by an excited positive mood. In fact, a study by Faber and Christenson (1996) finds that 80% of their sample stated they were most likely to be in a positive mood following an impulsive purchase. In the model discussed in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, such pleasure is one of the primary components within the conceptualization of a two-factored desire construct - one of the main drivers of the transition between impulsive and compulsive consumption. The second meaningful addition to Rook’s (1987) definition is the acknowledgment that the action is object focused (...to buy *something*). The consumer behaves impulsively to derive pleasure from the consumption of a given object, as opposed to a planned purchase with pure utility purposes.

According to Stern (1962), impulse buying can be divided into four distinct categories: (1) pure, (2) reminder, (3) suggestion, and (4) planned. Pure impulse buying and planned impulse buying can be seen as opposites. While pure impulse buying is defined as “the novelty or escape purchase which breaks a normal buying pattern” (59), planned impulse buying occurs when the consumer intends to make purchases based on coupons or in-store specials. Reminder and suggestion impulse purchasing, on the other hand, are quite similar. Reminder impulse buying is triggered by the sight of a product in need or by an advertisement, whereas suggestion impulse buying transpires when “a shopper sees a product for the first time and visualizes a need for it” (59).

The causes of impulsive purchasing are also thoroughly explored throughout the extant literature. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) developed a comprehensive model that evaluates impulse buying through situational (time and money availability) and individual difference (shopping enjoyment and impulse buying tendency) variables. Their most prominent contribution is their discussion of positive and negative affect, in which positive moods greatly increased the likelihood of impulsive behaviors. This finding is contrary to the affect discussions within the subsequent compulsive consumption literature review. Hausman (2000) later supported these findings, illustrating that impulse buying is motivated by the need to satisfy hedonic needs for fun and novelty, which is in line with Rook’s (1987) definition.

Youn and Faber (2000, 180) explore the relationship between impulse buying and personality traits, finding that a lack of self-control, stress reaction, and absorption (defined as “a tendency to become immersed in self-involving experiences triggered by engaging external and internal stimuli”) increases a consumer’s likelihood to act in



impulsive ways. Further, the authors sought to examine cues that trigger impulsive behaviors. Among these triggers were the availability of money (in line with Beatty and Ferrell (1998)), as well as lower priced or discounted items. Couched within these triggers is a discussion of emotion, as the authors' findings suggest that both positive and negative emotional states encourage impulsive behaviors. While this finding is somewhat contradictory to prior definitions, it is an important extension to theory, as impulsive behaviors can be generated by a general heightened emotional state, rather than just one of joy or excitement.

Rook and Fisher (1995) delve deeper into the discussion on impulsive buying by recognizing the differences between consumers with an impulsive trait and those who simply make impulse purchases. This difference is an important distinction to recognize within the scope of this manuscript; there is a distinction between a solitary act of impulsiveness and a consumer who possesses a trait that generates impulsive behavior within them. As such, the transition from impulsive consumption to compulsive consumption is not a universal phenomenon. Although a consumer may act impulsively (such as an unplanned purchase of a Snickers bar while standing in a check-out line), we do not argue that they will eventually become a compulsive consumer. Rather, the frequency of impulsion, combined with the driving nature of desire and the moderation of self-control, play a significant role in a consumer's transition to compulsive behavior.

It is clear from the review of literature that impulsive consumption is sudden, hedonically driven, and product focused. This behavior is largely triggered by both external and internal stimuli, which result in an intense desire to purchase a product once cognitive awareness has been generated. Resulting emotional affect (either positive or

relief from a prior negative mood state) is then immediately experienced by the consumer, suggesting a subsequent increased desired state for similar behavior schemes. The following section entails a literature review of compulsive consumption, in an attempt to discriminate between the two constructs (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1**  
**Distinction Between Impulsive and Compulsive Consumption**

	<b>Impulsive Consumption</b>	<b>Compulsive Consumption</b>
Definition	“a strong, sometimes irresistible urge: a sudden inclination to act without deliberation” (Goldenson 1984, 37)	“response to an uncontrollable drive or desire to obtain, use, or experience a feeling, substance or activity that leads an individual to repetitively engage in a behavior that will ultimately cause harm to the individual and/or to others” (O’Guinn and Faber 1989, 148)
Central Focus	Physical Object	Consumption Experience
Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time availability</li> <li>• Money availability</li> <li>• Positive mood states</li> <li>• Shopping enjoyment</li> <li>• Low prices/discounted items</li> <li>• Spontaneity</li> <li>• Physical proximity</li> <li>• Immediate gratification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative emotion states</li> <li>• Need for escape</li> <li>• Fantasy orientation</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<u>Negative</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-purchase financial problems</li> <li>• Product disappointment</li> <li>• Guilt</li> <li>• Feeling out of control</li> </ul> <u>Positive</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social approval</li> <li>• Positive Affect</li> <li>• Hedonic satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensified negative emotions</li> <li>• Severe debt</li> <li>• Disrupted personal relationships</li> <li>• Excessive product attainment</li> <li>• Social Disapproval</li> </ul>

## COMPULSIVE CONSUMPTION

Compared to impulsive consumption, compulsive purchasing is a relatively young topic within the marketing literature (Faber and O’Guinn 1992; Hirschman 1992; Rindfleish, Burroughs, and Denton 1997; Schlosser et al. 1994; and for an excellent review of compulsive consumption, see Faber and O’Guinn 2008). Faber, O’Guinn, and Krych (1987) spearheaded the movement introducing compulsive buying as “a type of consumer behavior which is inappropriate, typically excessive, and clearly disruptive to the lives of individuals” (132). Two years later, O’Guinn and Faber (1989) developed a more concise definition of the phenomenon stating that compulsive consumption is a “response to an uncontrollable drive or desire to *obtain, use, or experience* a feeling, substance or activity that leads an individual to *repetitively* engage in a behavior that will ultimately *cause harm to the individual* and/or to others” (148) (emphasis added by the author). Comparable to impulsive consumption, compulsive behaviors are irresistible urges that a consumer feels they *must* do even against their will (Scherhorn 1990).

It is integral to the discussion of this paper to address certain aspects of the definition by O’Guinn and Faber (1989), in comparison to the definition of impulsive consumption. First, a compulsive behavior is defined around an action, rather than centered on a consumption object as discussed within the impulsive consumption literature. Second, this action must be involuntarily repeated over time, rather than a solitary instance. Finally, compulsive behaviors are defined as harmful to the individual. While it may be argued that an impulsive action can be harmful to a consumer (e.g., if they do not have the money to support an impulsive purchase), compulsive consumption behaviors push the consumer into an addicted and uncontrollable state. Rather than

focusing on a product itself, a consumer in a compulsive state craves the feeling derived from the consumption activity and thus ultimately remains unsatisfied once the consumption object is obtained.

The power of one's emotions plays a significant role in compulsive purchasing behaviors. Unfortunately, such emotional states are primarily negative (e.g., anxiety, depression, and anger) and compulsive behavior is motivated by the desire to alter or escape from such feelings, although such diversion is short-lived (Faber and Christenson 1996). While some compulsive behaviors are developed as an attempt to prolong positive moods, Faber and Christenson (1996) discovered that most compulsive consumers are shown to "experience negative emotions more frequently and more deeply" (813). From this perspective, Faber and Vohs (2004) explained compulsive behavior as a reaction illustrated by escape theory. Consumers engage in compulsive behaviors to escape the painful realities of life and focus narrowly on immediate and pleasurable tasks. Such mood repair (the ability to relieve emotional torment through compulsive behaviors) is a common coping mechanism used among compulsive consumers (Elliot 1994). Although mood repair may be seen as acceptable behavior in limited quantities, compulsive consumers become dependent on the activity to relieve negative emotions, and thus develop an unhealthy and uncontrollable coping mechanism for normal emotional states.

Similar to impulsive consumption, compulsive buying has been linked to the presence of certain personality traits. O'Guinn and Faber (1989) evaluated a consumer's propensity to fantasize and found that compulsive buyers fantasized more than normal consumers. These fantasies are surmised to be used in an attempt to escape negative

feelings, “more easily dissociate negative consequences from antecedent behavior,” and find relief from the painful realities of life (Jacobs 1986, 153). Self-esteem and anxiety, which are more prominently developed through socialization in childhood, are also common traits discussed in the compulsive consumption literature (Elliot 1994; Faber, O’Guinn, and Krych 1987; O’Guinn and Faber 1989; Scherhorn 1990). A consumer’s struggle with self-esteem is further exacerbated by their inability to control their compulsive behaviors, generating a downward spiral. Scherhorn (1990) describes this lack of self-control as an experience that “grows to dominate the person’s life by gradually destroying the person’s ability to derive satisfaction from other involvements” (41). The consumer’s arousal system is thus compromised and reacts in unstable ways. As a result, the compulsive consumer relies on excitement and pleasure seeking motives that intensify as the consumption behavior persists over time (DeSarbo and Edwards 1996). With each consumption activity that leaves the consumer ultimately unsatisfied, the consumer seeks bigger and “better” means to reach their desired state of arousal.

One of the most unique aspects to compulsive consumption is the role the consumption object plays for the consumer. In fact, the consumption object often plays a relatively minimal role. Typically, compulsive consumers rarely use the products they purchase, often leaving the goods in the original packaging or locking the object in the trunk of a car or in a closet to hide the shame and/or guilt derived from the behavior (O’Guinn and Faber 1989). Instead, it is the “addictive experience” that is desired, as these consumers use the acquisition of the product as an excuse to temporarily escape their troubles and a way to cope with unhappiness (Scherhorn 1990, 40). Accordingly, compulsive consumption is a behavior that is triggered by internal stimuli and driven by

the fulfillment of experiential satisfaction (DeSarbo and Edwards 1996). Sadly, compulsive consumers rarely experience lasting satisfaction as, once the experience is over, they return to their original state of emptiness and need to escape.

## **DESIRE**

A similar theme between impulsivity and compulsivity is the presence of desire. Within impulsive purchasing behaviors, we see consumers desiring objects that they feel will bring them pleasure. Compulsive consumers, on the other hand, desire the shopping experience itself, leaving the meaning of the object behind. As such, one significant difference between the general population and the 5.8% of consumers engaged in compulsive buying behaviors (Koran et al. 2006, 1807) is their propensity to readily seek out pleasure enhancing activities (Whiteside and Lynam 2001). Yet, what is minimally understood in the extant literature is how consumers learn that such behaviors will generate hedonic qualities. As such, we conceptualize herein that the affective state experienced after an impulsive action is the catalyst that begins the addiction process. The understanding and development of consumer shopping desire is the ultimate foundation of the Compulsive Consumption Development Model.

Desire is a necessary and fundamental component within the development of compulsive behaviors, as “desire is a powerful phenomenon that stimulates consumption choices” (Chen 2009). Ultimately, it is desire that is the driving force of consumption behavior. Within this model, it is seen that desire motivates both impulsive behaviors (object-focused desire) and compulsive behavior (experience-focused desires). Belk et al. (2003) describe desire as a “hot, passionate emotion” that is “born between

consumption fantasies and social situational contexts” (327). Further, Belk et al. (2003) find that consumers describe their desires as “intense, profound, and powerfully motivating... unintentional, unplanned, illogical, and may be accompanied by mistakes and irrationality” (333). Additionally, participants likened their desires to fantasies, which mirror the discussions of O’Guinn and Faber (1989). This description of desire describes both the antecedents and the consequences of compulsive consumption, as consumers are drawn towards an irresistible action that is harmful to their overall well-being.

Consumers experience such feelings during both impulsive and compulsive consumption, yet it is important to again note that the focus of desire differs between both behaviors. From an impulsive consumption perspective, the consumer desires the object itself and obtaining the product provides pleasure (Belk et al. 2003). This situation can be characterized by the typical point-of-purchase scenario – while not intending to purchase a Snickers bar, the consumer spots the candy bar, suddenly feels a need for the product, and subsequently enjoys the delicious combination of caramel, peanuts, and nougat. Desire experienced within a compulsive context, however, is more intensely driven and experiential in nature. Experience desire is satisfied by exposure to the retail environment itself, as the consumer enjoys the more intangible elements of shopping such as browsing and social interaction with fellow shoppers and sales people.

Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) identify three reference-point shifts that increase an individual’s desire to consume: (a) close physical proximity, (b) increased temporal proximity, and (c) social comparison. These three aspects are important to recognize when assessing a consumer’s motivation to act impulsively. As defined in the literature

review, impulses are spontaneous and unplanned and are generated when certain consumption objects are brought into a consumer's cognitive frame either by marketing cues or physical presence. Without such physical or temporal proximity, the consumer would be unaware of the consumption object and thus fail to develop a desire to purchase. Similarly, consumers gain knowledge of pleasurable affect through social cues. Social comparison pushes a consumer to believe they will benefit from consuming in a similar way to their peers, resulting in a more intense desire for a given product.

Chen (2009) investigates the possible multifaceted nature of the desire construct within the context of contemporary art collectors and exhibit visitors. As such, the author explores a dichotomy of desire - one for object possession and one for object access. A qualitative analysis finds differences in the meaning of desire as expressed through differing channels of product attainment. In garnering the possession, individuals expressed desire in terms of long-term, intimate relationships used to develop strong, self-identification (929). Desire for access, however, is characterized as wanting a distant relationship with the object, heightened by sharing and enjoyment in community. While both characterizations of desire remain product focused, relevant insight is drawn from respondents' comments on the manifestation of addictive tendencies resultant from acting on initial desires. Such expressions were seen for both individuals who are possession- or access-focused, illustrating the fundamental role desire plays in the development of compulsive behaviors.

From an complementary perspective, Foddy and Savulescu (2007) characterize desires involved in impulsive and compulsive behaviors in three distinct ways such that they (a) are especially strong, (b) occur in a particular context "that triggers the



anticipation of pleasure and a strong drive to satisfy the desire,” and (c) are socially unacceptable (30). We see here that desires are both intense and harmful, which describes both consumption paradigms evaluated in this paper. The second point in this description exemplifies how a consumer proceeds through the impulsive → compulsive transition process. An impulse is triggered by an unanticipated emotional reaction that results in the purchase of an object. Once the consumer gets a taste of satisfaction (i.e. positive affect) from purchasing, their desire for additional pleasurable feelings is heightened. During the transition stage, the desire for pleasure eventually manifests itself in an alternative agenda – to escape pain. Belk et al. (2003) further express this idea noting that “desire lies in the promise of escape or alterity” (335) and that “the condition of craving still anticipates a positive state where things will be better..., a matter of acting against our better judgment” (334). The authors describe the evolution of desire as a cycle in which “desire-acquisition-reformulation of desire, ad infinitum” causes the continual craving for pleasurable mood states derived from deviant consumption behaviors (341).

In the presented model, the function of desire rests as the catalyst for compulsive tendencies and behaviors. In a similar vein to Belk et al.’s (2003) assessment of the desire cycle, it is proposed herein that desire for pleasurable affect increases incrementally as the consumer continues to purchase (products) impulsively. This increased desire will eventually manifest itself into a desire not for the product, but for the shopping experience. It is at this tipping point that the consumer will progress into a compulsive consumer.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Before fully delving into the transitional model, a caveat must be considered. The model presented in this paper is one path to compulsive consumption development and is not intended to dictate how every consumer becomes encapsulated by compulsive behaviors. There are indeed numerous substances and activities (e.g., smoking, illegal drugs, and eating) beyond the scope of this paper that I am not suggesting begin through impulsive actions. Such differences exist in either the behavioral or chemical facets of different potentially addictive situations. Addictions to chemical substances (e.g., nicotine, caffeine, and methamphetamine) alter the chemical synapses of the brain producing instances of physical dependence and withdrawal (APATF 2000). Other addictions, such as those related to work or exercise for example, do not apply to the presented framework, as such behaviors are inherently not impulsive – one does not impulsively go to work. As such, the Compulsive Consumption Development Model applies to consumptive behaviors that maintain the potential to be unplanned and can occur instantly; examples of such include shopping and gambling.

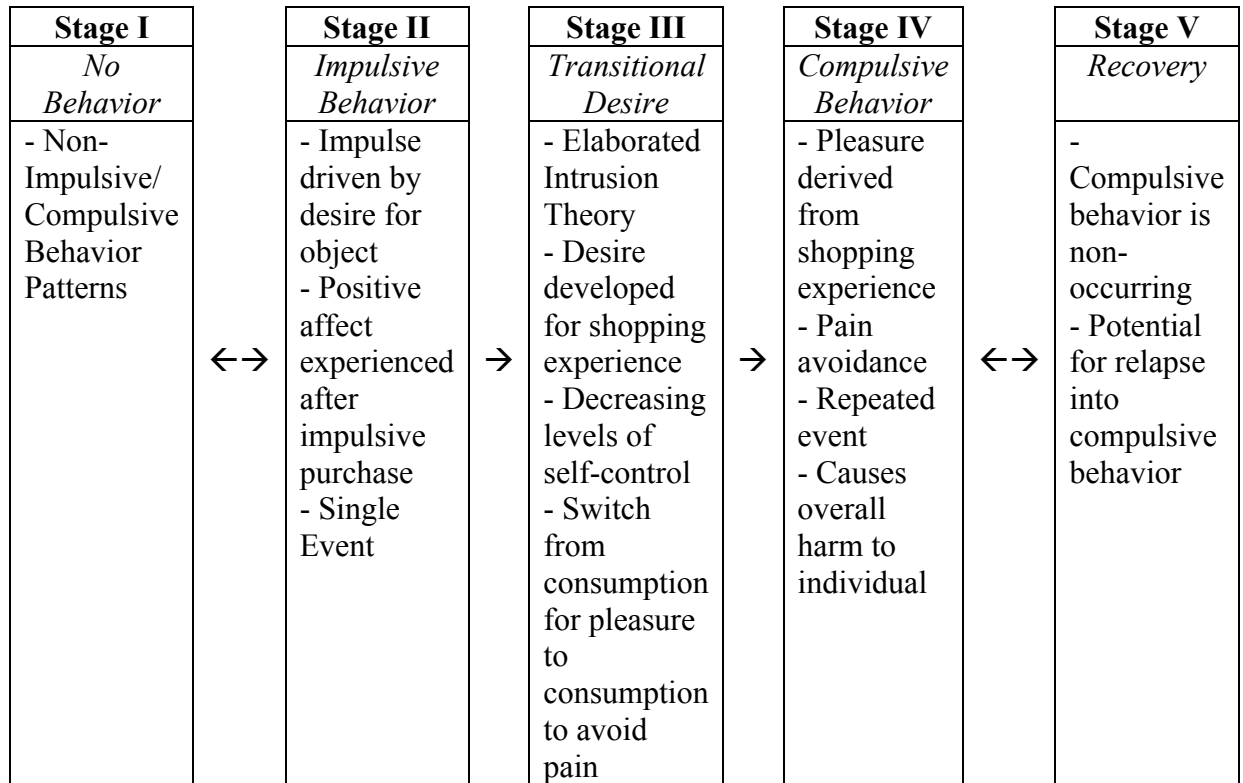
For this reason, the presented paper seeks to evaluate consumer behavior within a shopping context. Herein, the goal of this dissertation is to evaluate two apparent gaps in the literature as related to the development of compulsive consumption behaviors. First, we seek to understand the role of impulsivity in generating long-term compulsive behaviors. Second, minimal investigation into the role and nature of desire within the shopping context is present within the marketing domain. As such, the following research questions are put forth to both contribute to the continual development of marketing knowledge and increase our understanding of harmful consumption behaviors.

1. Does impulsivity facilitate the development of compulsive purchasing behaviors?
2. How is desire manifested within the shopping experience as it contributes to the development of compulsive purchasing behaviors?
3. What measurement differences persist in accurately identifying compulsive consumers?

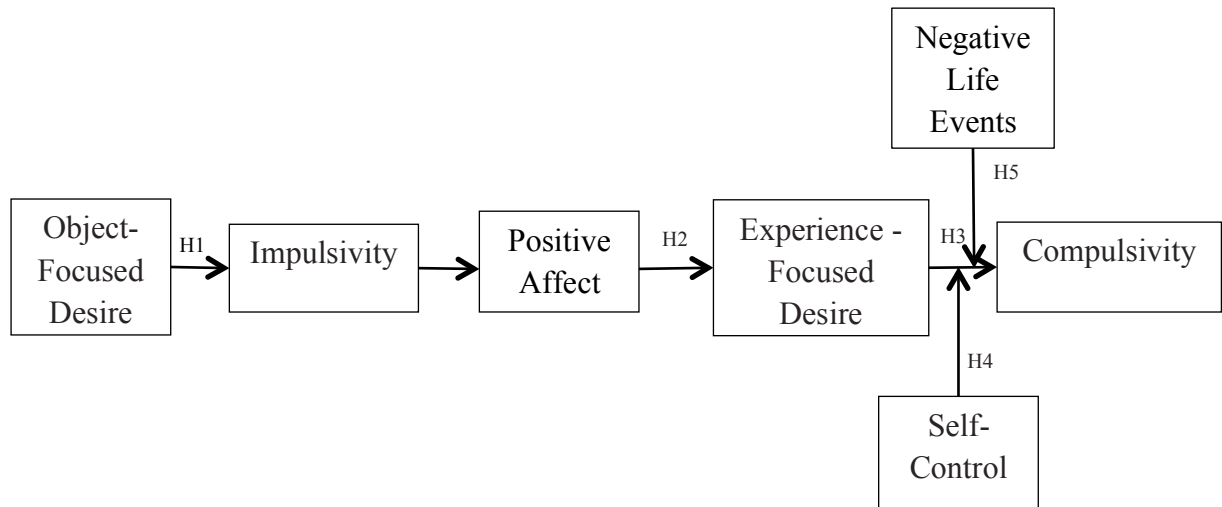
### **THE COMPULSIVE CONSUMPTION DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

The model presented in Figure 2.1 and 2.2 represents a consumer's transition from impulsive to compulsive purchasing behaviors. Although scholarship within the marketing domain primarily separates impulsive and compulsive consumption into different phenomena, some hints have been made at the connection between the two. For example, Rook and Hoch's (1985, 511) statement that impulsive consumption may "deteriorate into a destructive character disorder," suggests that harmful characteristics may develop from impulsiveness. Further, Hirschman (1992) discusses the possibility that some impulsive consumers "may be at risk to move into compulsive consumption" and that some "people usually purchased in response to impulses but had lost the ability to establish and maintain rules to constrain their buying" (157).

**Figure 2.1**  
**Stages of the Compulsive Consumption Development Model**



**Figure 2.2**  
**Model and Hypotheses**



In order to discuss the sequential movement from one type of consumption to the other, it is first necessary to establish a relationship between the two constructs. As discussed in the literature review sections of this dissertation, impulsive and compulsive consumption are distinct constructs that represent destructive consumer behaviors. This paper intends to argue that consumers in Stage II (Impulsive Consumption Behavior) are at risk to transitioning to Stage IV (Compulsive Consumption Behavior), thus suggesting that compulsive consumption may develop from impulsive consumption. As explained by Elaborated Intrusion Theory (Kavanagh, Andrade, and May 2005), the consumer's purchasing behavior changes in Stage III (the Transition Stage) through learned experiences relating to positive emotional states and reflected through two distinct conceptualizations of desire. The Transitional Stage expresses the true foundation of the developmental model. As consumers learn from positive affective responses resulting from impulse purchases, a greater need for consumption is stimulated. Such positive feelings emphasize a learned behavior that is further used as an escape mechanism from pain. Through elaboration on positive affective states, consumers experience a transition away from product-focused desire into one that is experiential in nature. It is in this transition that the desire experienced by the consumer grows more intense in nature, thus stimulating the ultimate transition into Stage IV.

#### Stage I: No Behavior

The first stage in the model is classified as a state of "No Behavior," which specifically relates to both impulsive and compulsive consumption actions. In this stage, the consumer does not exhibit any of the signs relating to the phenomena discussed in this paper, and thus normal consumption patterns exist. The consumer purchases goods

without feelings of sudden intensity or need, and mood states after the shopping experience remain static. There exists no uncontrollable desire to consume more, and the consumer maintains the ability to resist other unneeded products.

Although a consumer in Stage I does not express any of the common signs relating to impulsive or compulsive consumption, there remains a possibility for him/her to transition into Stage II and to make impulse purchases. This sentiment was acknowledged earlier in the paper, as consumers are likely to buy goods impulsively at one point or another (e.g., at the check-out counter). Movement between Stage I and Stage II can be fluid and does not necessarily entail progressive movement into Stage III and beyond or to dangerous behavior. Most generally, consumers are categorized into Stage I with occasional lapses into Stage II.

#### Stage II: Impulsive Consumption Behavior

Once in Stage II, the consumer either does or does not experience an emotional reaction to the impulsive purchase. For certain consumers, the impulse purchase is the beginning of the transition into a compulsive consumer. During an impulsive act, the consumer is driven toward purchasing an object suddenly and without prior deliberation. This consumption behavior stems from a positive mood state and a motivated draw toward objects that generate pleasure; consumers are driven to behave impulsively by an object-focused desire (Belk et al. 2003). Such desires are manifested by marketing cues (e.g., in-store signage, promotional campaigns) or physical proximity through which the consumer is made aware of the consumption object and is driven to purchase (Chen

2009). The impulse purchase is irresistible to the consumer and occurs at a moment when the consumer feels they *must* own the desired product.

**H1: An increase in object-focused desire is related to an increase in impulsive buying behavior.**

Further enhancing the draw towards pleasurable feelings is the instantaneous positive affect that the consumer experiences after an impulsive purchase. As discussed, a defining aspect of impulsive consumption is its hedonic nature. Consumers experience a sense of pleasure and euphoria after an impulsive purchase, as the purchased good is described as making the consumer feel “good,” “satisfied,” “wonderful,” and “high” (Rook 1987, 195).

Discussion of affect within the literature highlights two primary sources: (a) task-induced affect, and (b) ambient affect (Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). For the purpose of this discussion, task-induced affect is the more appropriate fit, as the positive affect is derived from the impulsive behavior rather than background conditions. It is important to distinguish the exact motivation behind the affect, as these emotions play an integral role as the consumer moves through the transition process. Positive affect is developed as the consumer impulsively acquires the consumption object.

**Stage III: Transitional Behavior**

A consumer moves beyond Stage II into Stage III when his/her impulsive behaviors begin to have a significant effect on his/her emotions and internal motivations. In Stage III, a transition is occurring through which a consumer becomes no longer focused on the consumption object itself; rather, he/she becomes motivated by the pleasure derived from the actual shopping experience. This transition is seen through a

dichotomy of desire states, one that begins with a desire for a product and develops into a desire for the experience itself, as defined as an “emotionally involving, substantial mental activity that includes multiple symbolic elements, rather than tangible features” (Kleine and Baker 2004). Such transition can be understood through the Elaborated Intrusion Theory, in which intrusive thoughts (e.g., awareness stimulated by marketing cues) are elaborated on by the consumer, thus spurring a deep emotional reaction (Kavanagh, Andrade, and May 2005).

*Elaborated Intrusion Theory.* Elaborated Intrusion (EI) Theory explains the intensification of emotional responses due to outside stimuli. The notion of EI theory begins with spontaneous, intrusive thoughts arising within an individual, often leading to a behavioral reaction (Kavanagh et al. 2005). Examples of such occurrences within the marketing domain are commonly stimulated by in-store signage and point-of-purchase displays. Such stimuli generate sudden and unexpected increases in desires solely focused on the target object at hand when the product is imminently available (Loewenstein 1996). When such intrusion drives the consumer to purchase the object, impulsivity has occurred. Events occurring subsequently after the intrusive thought (i.e., product purchase) are processed within memory and become a learned condition (see Singleton and Gorelick 1998). As impulsivity breeds a learned experience of positive affect, so too do one’s actions resulting from intrusive stimuli. It is at this stage that object-focused desire is present within the consumer’s consumption development.

The second phase within EI theory is prompted by a sense of deprivation, whether primed by an aversive emotional state or heightened by an awareness of a cognitive or emotional deficit (Kavanagh et al. 2005). Within this phase, individuals recall and



elaborate on positive emotional responses from past events, often through the use of sensory imagery and fantasies akin to that experienced within compulsive consumption. The felt desire intensifies as the individual continues to elaborate on the felt emotions from past responses. It is from this point that the consumer generates increasingly complex emotional responses within the retail environment. In the context of retail shopping behavior, the consumer recalls the positive emotional state generated from a previous shopping experience, not from a single moment of impulsivity. Desire is now transformed into one of yearning for an experience, which the consumer has learned brings relief and happiness.

*Desires.* The model presented within this dissertation explores the fundamental role of desires within the development of compulsive purchasing. Using EI theory, it is suggested that there are two driving forces of desire in the development of compulsive purchasing practices – desire for the object and desire for the experience. Object-focused Desire is first triggered by external factors that stimulate a sudden and intense desire for the product (Dholakia, Gopinath, and Bagozzi 2005), such as marketing stimuli, point-of-purchase displays, and the availability of money. Accordingly, an impulsive purchase is driven by appetitive motivations (Bozarth 1994) and results in subsequent feelings of positive affect. For individuals consuming in impulsive ways, the primary driver behind the behavior rests in the motivation for positive affect derived from the consumption object. Most often, the individual behaves solely from “an inclination to behave reflexively and without deliberation” (Dholakia et al. 2005). Hence forth, the individual recognizes the increased positive affect resulting from such an action and is now primed to generate pleasure from consumption objects.

The next trigger within the development process, however, is internally driven. As discussed in the section on compulsive consumption, compulsive behavior is motivated by a desire to escape pain and often stems from negative emotional states (Faber 2004), also known as aversive motivations (Bozarth 1994). As the individual slips into a state of negativity, he/she begins to seek out ways to resolve said emotional discourse. Recalling times of pleasure situated within a retail setting, the individual misrepresents prior positive emotional states as driven by the shopping experience, rather than the actuality of impulsive behaviors. Accordingly, the consumer develops a desire for the shopping experience and thus experiences satisfaction once the desire has been satiated.

The separation between external and internal triggers is the key to the transition described in Stage III (Kellett and Bolton 2009). Within the Compulsive Consumption Developmental Model, the consumer begins the process with an externally triggered desire to purchase a consumption object. Although unplanned, the consumer recognizes the pleasure derived from such behavior and thus the trigger is reinforced. As unpleasant or painful mood states begin to affect the consumer, he/she seeks to relieve such uncomfortable feelings with formerly proven means of pleasure development. As the consumer mentally elaborates on the effects of past shopping experiences, the individual finds him/herself satisfied from both external and internal cravings. Once this internal pain has been replaced by a pleasurable experience, the consumer begins to treat the shopping experience as a coping mechanism.

**H2: Positive affect within the shopping experience leads to increased levels of experience-focused desire.**

*Consumer Transition.* It is through the interplay of intensified desires and diminished self-control that buying “becomes a repetitive, almost automatic, response to a specific set of feelings or circumstances” (Faber 2004); thus, the behavioral and psychological motives of the consumer may advance from impulse to compulsive. In kind, Jacobs (1986) identified two important components attributing to the perpetuation of the transition: “(a) the positive reinforcement obtained from the memory and expectation of pleasure, and (b) the negative reinforcement of escape from and avoidance of anticipated pain” (24). As discussed earlier, object-focused desire facilitates the first impulsive encounter, leading the consumer to recognize the resulting positive affect and, subsequently, to store that moment in memory. The purchased object has now become a learned source of pleasure as intensified feelings and the need for repeated exposure become apparent to the consumer. The pleasure derived from the impulsively gained object is felt deeper and the consumer begins to elaborate on such intrusive thoughts more intensely. Self-control is slowly depleted and, as the next desired good is obtained, the consumer not only begins to derive pleasure from the consumption object itself, but also the shopping experiences within the retail environment.

This effect is most appropriately characterized by Foddy and Savulescu (2007) as the hedonic treadmill, which explains that “the same level of some pleasurable activity performed repetitively generates less pleasure such that [consumers] require newer and higher levels of activity” (31). In the beginning stages of the model, the consumption object generates enough pleasure to satisfy the consumer. However, as the process evolves, the consumer desires more and more stimulation, while also losing the ability to

independently create and enjoy pleasurable experiences (Nakken 1996). This need for increased stimulation is found within the purchasing experience.

The ability to generate pleasure from the shopping experience, however, is attributed to negative reinforcement - the second force operating within the transitional process (Jacobs 1986). This motivation develops further into the cycle, akin to operant learning. As the consumer psychologically begins to recognize the pleasure derived from his/her impulsive consumption behaviors, such behavior is used to alleviate pain and discomfort. This emotional pattern was found by Faber and Christenson (1996), as compulsive consumers indicated having more negative mood states before shopping, more positive mood states while shopping, and more negative feelings of regret and depression shortly after the purchase, than the comparison group. As positive affect wears off, the consumer develops a sense of desire to return him/her to the previous pleasurable state. Through mental elaboration, the consumer develops desires focused now on the shopping experience and, in combination with a depleted level of self-control, is more easily motivated to purchase again once triggered into a state of emotional distress or deprivation. Thus, the consumer progresses into a state of compulsive consumption.

### **H3: Experience-focused desires increase compulsive purchasing behaviors.**

*Self-Control.* A final important factor experienced within Stage III is the moderating variable of self-control, such that a low level of self-control exacerbates the transition from impulsive to compulsive purchasing behaviors. As is frequently cited within the addiction literature, individuals both easily tempted by desires and cravings and those within the addiction process exhibit an inherent inability to self-regulate their emotional states and related behaviors (Keane 2004). As such, one's level of self-control

is predicted to either stall (high self-control) or accelerate (low self-control) one's development into compulsivity.

Conceptualized from Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) original definition of self-control, Grasmick et al. (1993, 8) identified six main components of the construct that most appropriately fit the model proposed in this paper: (1) Impulsivity, (2) Preference for simple tasks, (3) Risk seeking, (4) Prone to physical activity, (5) Self-centered, and (6) Hot tempered. The most noticeable facet of Grasmick et al.'s definition is the first component, impulsivity, which clearly identifies self-control as an obvious player within the Compulsive Consumption Development Model. Additionally, Tangey et al. (2004) discuss self-control as "the ability to override or change one's inner responses, as well as to interrupt undesired behavioral tendencies (such as impulses) and refrain from acting on them" (274). It is clear that the self-control literature identifies impulsivity as a force affecting a consumer's ability to maintain self-control.

Furthermore, there is a strong link between the concepts of desire and self-control, leading to interplay between the two phenomena. Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) illustrated this connection in their discussion of time-inconsistent preferences. Time-inconsistent preferences, defined as a choice driven by hedonic pleasure that otherwise would not have been made under a more clear cognitive state, demonstrate a consumer's inability to maintain self-control when faced with the risk of deprivation. The authors state that the struggle between desire and willpower is the primary determinant of irrational consumption behavior, such that when desire outweighs willpower, the consumer is most likely to act impulsively. If the object is not obtained, the consumer

experiences deprivation, and subsequently experiences an even heightened desire to purchase.

The reasons why self-control often fails have been explored by Baumeister and colleagues (see Baumeister (2002) for an integrated overview). Citing “standards, a monitoring process, and the operational capacity to alter one’s behavior” (671), Baumeister evaluates under what conditions a consumer is likely to consume irrationally. Standards involve a consumer’s goals and ideals that dictate their intentions. Self-control failure is seen to arise when conflict exists between these standards and uncompromising desire. In fact, Winston (1980) suggested 20 years prior that much of the struggle with self-control involves an individual’s conflict between pleasure and duty. A consumer may recognize the rational path to take, but is tempted by an option that produces a more satisfying result (as characterized by the conflict between a devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other). The emotional distress derived from such conflict breaks down the consumer’s ability to control purchasing behavior.

Baumeister’s (2002) third reason, the consumer’s capacity to change, is arguably the most influential of the three and describes how self-control resources are often depleted over time. As self-control resources are used, the ability to maintain steady amounts of control decreases. Deteriorating amounts of self-control can be attributed to fatigue, coping with stress, continued exertion of self-control, and even the activities of everyday life (Baumeister 2002; Muraven, Baumeister, and Tice 1999). As a consumer struggles with the conflict between duty and desire, their resources of control are continually in decline leaving them more susceptible to impulsive behaviors (Muraven, Tice, and Baumeister 1998). Wegner (1994) discusses self-control from the alternative

perspective of ironic processing. The author explains that actively avoiding impulsivity incidentally causes an increase in the behavior due to resulting decreased resources. Furthermore Shiv and Fedorikhin (1999) found that consumers went for the more affect-producing option when processing resources were low. By trying so hard to resist, the consumer in fact puts him/herself at a greater risk.

As such, several studies have addressed specific issues relating to self-control and impulsive/compulsive behaviors. Wills, DuHamel, and Vaccaro (1995) and Cook et al. (1998) found low self-control to be a prominent predictor of substance abuse among adolescents and adults, respectively, while Peluso et al. (1999) found similar results among college students, which also included unhealthy eating habits. Furthermore, Tangney et al. (2004) found a negative relationship between scores on their self-control scale and the *Short Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test*, which measures consumer propensity for alcoholism. Although these traditionally thought of compulsive behaviors (i.e., drugs and alcohol) are outside the domain presented in this paper, compulsive buyers behave in a similar manner. While the type of compulsion may differ, the effects of self-control remain the same.

#### **H4: Consumer Spending Self-Control attenuates the relationship between Experience-Focused Desire and Compulsivity.**

##### **Stage IV: Compulsive Consumption Behavior**

Compulsive consumption is the fourth stage in the Compulsive Consumption Development Model. At this stage, the consumer is completely overcome by compulsive purchasing behaviors as defined in the review section at the start of the paper. The consumer's behavior is repetitive in nature and becomes detrimental to his/her overall

wellbeing. The urges to purchase persist; however, the consumer derives pleasure from the act of shopping and regards the consumption object as merely a means to an end to avoid pain. It is at this stage that the consumer begins to neglect not only him/herself, but others around them. Also classified as addictive behavior (Elliot 1994; Faber and O'Guinn 2008; Hirschman 1992; Scherhorn 1990), compulsive purchasing places the consumer in a state of duress in which he/she feels as though he/she *must* shop regardless of any harmful consequences.

#### Stage V: Recovery

Recovery is the final stage in the Compulsive Consumption Development Model. Recovery occurs when the consumer is no longer exhibiting compulsive behaviors, most often mediated by treatment procedures. Although recovery is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to recognize this stage in connection with compulsive behaviors. Just as not every consumer progresses into a compulsive buyer, not every consumer reaches the stage of recovery. Furthermore, not every consumer who reaches recovery remains there; often, consumers move back and forth between compulsion and recovery several times before fully committing to life-long abstinence from compulsive behaviors (Nakken 1996).

The stage of recovery as it relates to compulsive buying is still an area needing future research. While recovery is a well-developed area of discussion within the addiction literature, typical recovery methods, such as abstinence (Nakken 1996; Wormer 2003), are unrealistic for consumers plagued by compulsive purchasing behaviors. It is simply not feasible for a person to stop shopping completely. Future research needs to



examine how to remove the sense of pleasure derived from the shopping experience. While erasing psychological motives may arguably seem unrealistic, some suggestions have been made thus far to enhance and develop a consumer's control processes, through which he/she is able to control his/her compulsive behavior when triggered by a desire-evoking situation (Kellett and Bolton 2009).

### **THEORETICAL ADDENDUM**

As a result of my dissertation proposal, several suggestions were made to improve both the theoretical foundation and statistical analysis present in my dissertation. In line with the mixed methods style of this dissertation, these changes are not implemented within Study 1, and rather addressed in both Study 2 and Study 3.

One of the most fundamental suggestions was to consider the Life Course Model as a possible explanation for compulsivity development. Upon review of the literature, we believe the Life Course Model to be a necessary addition to the theoretical model, and it will thus be incorporated going further (see Moschis 2007 for a marketing-related review).

Fundamentally, the Life Course paradigm puts forth that significant events within one's life (either biological or psychological) generate fundamental changes in the course of one's future (Pulkkinen and Caspi 2002). Such life events (e.g., loss of a loved one) require an individual to adapt to new life circumstances which are posited to have a lasting impression in both thoughts and behavior for the affected individual (Lee et al. 2012). For such a Life Course Model to be adapted, individuals must experience a transition away from an 'original state' and into a 'destination state,' which is "thought to

be stressful because they set in motion a sequelae which are themselves stressful and threaten the individual's identity" (Wheaton 1990, 211). While all individuals are susceptible to such changes, the Life Course paradigm suggests that it is the occurrence of a significant life event that heightens the probability of change. We believe the Life Course model to be relevant in the context at hand due to the importance placed on early life stage transitions (Moschis 2007). As compulsive consumption emerges for an individual during late adolescence and young adulthood (Pechman et al. 2005), we use the Life Course Model to connect significant life events to fundamental changes in one's consumption behaviors later in life. In the context of this dissertation, such significant life events play the role of a trigger in propelling the consumer into compulsive buying tendencies.

There are three theoretical perspectives within the Life Course Perspective: (1) normative, (2) stress, and (3) human capital (Moschis 2007). First, the normative perspective places focus on the socially prescribed roles of individuals and thus the movement into and out of these roles throughout one's life (George 1993). Example events affecting one's normative behaviors would include marriage and retirement. Within these events, individuals are required to adapt their behaviors to fit society's standards, through which such behaviors occur in anticipation of impending change.

The normative perspective is likely to play a significant role in compulsive consumption development in moments of perceived need for status or uniqueness from one's newly acquired peer group. As is uncovered throughout the qualitative data collected for this dissertation, many individuals experienced an increase in shopping behaviors surrounding their entrance into both high school and undergraduate education.

Through this, participants mentioned pressure to fit into the crowd or live up to the standards of style (e.g., shopping at a specific store or entrance into sorority life). The normative perspective alone, however, is not a sufficient explanation for compulsivity development. Thus, the second perspective, stress, is additionally considered.

The stress perspective may be considered a stronger driving force than the normative perspective as stressful events generate disequilibrium, thus demanding either the enactment of coping mechanisms or necessary behavioral change. While not all life events cause an individual a significant level of stress, it is indeed possible that both the occurrence of an event combined with related anticipation requires both role enactment and psychological dislocation (Lee et al. 2012). Such results lead to increased feelings of stress and subsequent changes in consumption lifestyle (Moschis 2007). It is through this adjustment that one is likely to experience movement into compulsivity. As compulsive behaviors within the marketplace are often used as coping mechanisms (O'Guinn and Faber 1989), individuals experiencing significant or traumatic life events are at greater risk for compulsivity development.

The Life Course Model parallels the existent discussion on compulsive consumption behaviors as both phenomena exist within nonlinear, unstable trajectories (Pearlin and Skaff 1996). Both theoretical concepts maintain highly contextual circumstances that may differ considerably between individuals, even in static situations. Accordingly, we believe the Life Course Model to play a significant role in the development of compulsive behaviors, as said life events are likely to play a substantial role in an individual's view and use of the marketplace. Again, it must be recognized that all consumers are not susceptible to the same influences and subsequent coping

mechanisms. As such, we see the same assumption within the Life Course paradigm, as not every individual reacts similarly when faced with stress and adversity. Instead, we conceptualize Life Events as a trigger that intensifies one's progression into compulsivity. From this, we introduce an additional hypothesis into the proposed model, as such:

**H5: Negative life events experienced by the individual intensify the relationship between Experience-Focused Desire and Compulsivity.**

### **CHAPTER 3: METHOD - OVERVIEW**

A mixed method design was utilized to test the hypotheses presented within this proposed dissertation. Fundamentally, mixed method designs employ a variety of methods driven by the research question(s) utilizing discovery as a means of hypothesis testing and theme construction (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Mixed methods designs, while formally rare in the marketing domain, combine multiple research methods, including, but not limited to, content analysis, qualitative in-depth interviews, and quantitative survey and experimental designs (Harrison and Reilly 2011). Different means of mixed method designs are present within the literature split by (a) sequential, (b) concurrent, and (c) embedded data collection strategies. While Harrison and Reilly (2011) found the predominance of studies within their content analysis to be comprised of sequentially-oriented, quantitatively-emphasized methodological designs, the growing presence of mixed method pieces signals an increased acceptance within the marketing domain.

Mixed method designs are most notably used within an exploratory context to glean an understanding of unknown constructs, develop new instruments, and/or test a developing theory (Harrison and Reilly 2011). An embedded design was employed in this dissertation, through which the qualitative findings play a supporting role in understanding the pathways proposed and explored within the theoretical model. Accordingly, the qualitative study herein was embedded within a larger survey design with interview data playing a supportive and enhancing role in the quantitative findings uncovered. Further, quantitative inquiry was used for participant selection (Creswell et

al. 2003), as those recognized compulsive consumers were contacted to participate in the qualitative portion of the study.

We believe a mixed methods design to be the most appropriate methodological approach in completing this dissertation, as we were seeking to understand a complex consumer behavior phenomenon: compulsive consumption. As emphasized by Powell et al. (2008, 306), mixed method designs allow researchers to be “more flexible, integrative, and holistic in their investigative techniques, as they strive to address a range of complex research questions that arise.” As such, we employed both a quantitative survey design and qualitative in-depth interviews to most appropriately understand the multifaceted nature of compulsivity development. Multiple studies were used to confirm findings of alternate methods, as well as to incorporate primary findings into a more informed qualitative discovery.

The two studies within this dissertation - (1) a quantitative survey and (2) qualitative in-depth interviews - were performed concurrently to both gain a statistical understanding of the relationships between the variables at play in the presented model, as well as to provide personal insights into the developmental nature of compulsive consumption (see Table 3.1 for data collection stages). Both studies feed off of each other, as the interview questions sought to provide qualitative understanding of the presented pathways, while the survey provided both for interview participants and unlikely correlated relationships that needed further investigation.

**Table 3.1**  
**Stages of Data Collection**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Purpose of Data</b>	<b>Time Frame Collected</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>Sample Type</b>
Study 1	Scale Development; Exploratory Factor Analysis, Iteration #1	October 2010	120	Undergraduate students
Study 1	Scale Development; Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Iteration #1	March 2011	305	Undergraduate students
Study 1	Scale Development; Exploratory Factor Analysis, Iteration #2	May 2012	91	General population from Amazon's Mechanical Turk
Study 1	Scale Development; Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Iteration #2; Model Testing	June 2012	587	General population from Amazon's Mechanical Turk
Study 2	In-Depth Interviews	April 2010 - Present	33	Undergraduate students (compulsive consumers)

The quantitative survey also provided the means for scale development procedures necessary in developing the newly formed construct of Consumer Shopping Desire. We began study 1 with scale development procedures following prescribed protocols according to both Churchill (1979) and Peter (1981) that walk through (1) item development, (2) item purification, (3) exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and (4) complete validity testing. Item development and purification procedures utilized both expert resources, as well as the extant literature to identify appropriate measurement items concurrent with Belk et al.'s (2003) conceptualization of consumer desire. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses further refined the scale items and revealed a dual-natured desire construct through which object- and experience-focused desire

exists. Such scale development procedures had to be repeated, however, due to the poor model fit incorporating the original items. After reformulating the scale items, we proceeded through strong confirmatory factor analyses. We concluded with validity testing through nomological, discriminant, and convergent validity testing to ensure the consumer shopping desire construct provided for a unique contribution to marketing scholarship.

With scale development completed, we tested our proposed model with structural equation modeling using AMOS statistical software. While a longitudinal design would provide for ideal results, we believed a SEM model to be the next best option in assessing relational pathways and contributing factors in the development of compulsive consumption. We took a stepwise approach to model testing, beginning with Hypothesis 1 and progressing through the conceptualized development model. Through this, we find support for our model, as well as the addition of influential pathways from object-focused desire to experience-focused desire and from impulsivity to compulsivity.

As the issue of compulsive consumption is a personal one and likely to elicit apprehensive feelings of honesty, we tested for response bias to ensure our results accurately reflected one's level of compulsivity. Accordingly, social desirability was tested using two scales, (1) Crowne and Marlowe (1960) and (2) Paulhus' (1991) BIDR scale. First testing social desirability according to the Crowne and Marlowe (1960) scale (short version), we find an acceptable scale mean ( $M = 7.91$ ) with a non-significant correlation between said scale and compulsive buying ( $r = .06$ ,  $p = .65$ ). We find similar results using Paulhus (1991) with an acceptable scale mean ( $M = 10.78$ ) and a non-significant correlation between social desirability and compulsive buying ( $r = .19$ ,  $p =$



.23). The non-significant results found here indicate that responses by study participants were not biased by tendencies to answer items in a socially responsible manner; thus, we infer from the test of social desirability that participant responses to the compulsive buying scale are both truthful and reliable for usage in our study.

Study 2 took an alternative approach with a qualitative exploration of identified compulsive consumers. Study 2 played an integral role within our exploration of compulsivity as it allowed for candid conversation and a retrospective account of one's unique shopping experiences. From our interviews, we sought to observe two separate issues: (1) measurement differences between the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) and Ridgway et al. (2008) compulsive buying scales, and (2) the role of impulsivity and desire within the development of compulsive consumption. The interviews completed in this part of the dissertation were conducted in one of the researcher's private offices to ensure confidentiality of participant's responses. Each interview was audio recorded and lasted from 30-60 minutes; interviews included questions that sought to understand both past and current behaviors within the retail environment, with an emphasis on situational factors and triggers that are emphasized during a compulsive episode.

Interview participants were identified through both the quantitative portion of the dissertation study, as well as a snowball technique from completed interviewees. After each interview, the researcher sent a thank you email to the participant as well as invited them to forward along information to friends they believed would be interested in participating. Each lead was subsequently asked to complete a qualifying survey used to identify compulsive tendencies according to Faber and O'Guinn (1992) and Ridgway et al. (2008). Interviews were completed until saturation was reached, finding saturation to

exist more quickly among participants deemed compulsive according to Faber and O'Guinn (1992) than with Ridgway et al. (2008). As explained within Chapter 5, individuals deemed compulsive according to Faber and O'Guinn (1992) are more closely aligned with extant literature and thus interviews reached saturation more quickly than those individuals only registered compulsive according to Ridgway et al. (2008). Conversely, interviews with individuals deemed compulsive only according to Ridgway et al. (2008) exhibited more variation in responses and thus more interviews were required to reach theoretical saturation.

After the in-depth interviews were completed, we employed an illustrative case study methodological inquiry to specifically assess and compare the differing consumption patterns between identified compulsive individuals according to the two compulsive measurements utilized herein (Yin 2003). Utilizing the presence of compulsive tendencies as a bounded system to uncover specific case-based themes (Creswell 2007), we are able to parcel out the apparent consumption differences among individuals scoring differently on the two forms of compulsive measurement. Using this method, we are able to compare the two categories of compulsive individuals, subsequently developing behavioral themes characteristic of each group.

Qualitative analysis was employed using MaxQDA analysis software through which the interviews were examined and coded according to behavioral themes throughout all stages of compulsivity development. Data was coded according to the following five elements: (1) behaviors, (2) events, (3) strategies, (4) relationships, and (5) consequences. Relevant quotations were selected from the data and placed into one of the five thematic buckets (Creswell 2007). From here, each category was assessed and

themes were uncovered according to the abundance of theoretically similar quotations. Quotations that were not repeated by other individuals were eliminated from the analysis, as well as themes that were not consistent with the predominance of the other interviewees. Finally, end themes were compared to existent literature to evaluate consistency with prior studies, as well as to check for interviewer or interviewee bias. No themes were eliminated due to inconsistency with the literature or bias. With themes developed, the authors were able to assess both the quality of compulsivity measurement, as well as triangulate the proposed compulsivity development model with the quantitative statistical model presented in Study 2.

## **CHAPTER 4: STUDY 1 - QUANTITATIVE DESIGN**

The first study employed within this dissertation is a quantitative survey design through which the proposed model will be empirically tested. In developing the conceptualized framework and assessing possible means of methodological confirmation, it became clear to the researchers that there exists no current scale addressing the concept of desire. After a thorough review of the marketing domain, the closest scale in measuring hedonic experiences within the shopping environment is encapsulated by Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994), which seeks to measure one's personal shopping value. Value in this context is applied from Holbrook's (1986) definition of value as the key outcome variable derived by either an object or an event – often evoking a sense of accomplishment or enjoyment. While the Babin et al. (1994) scale measures both hedonic and utilitarian values within the shopping experience, the scale does not truly hit on the concept of desire as defined by Belk et al. (2003). Accordingly, appropriate scale development is needed.

The process of scale development herein takes a detailed and iterative approach concurrent with the marketing literature (Churchill 1979) (see Table 3.1). First, it is necessary to develop a theoretical foundation of Consumer Shopping Desire by defining the construct itself and identifying related constructs already present in marketing scholarship. Our scale development goes through two iterations of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses - first using a student sample and secondly using general population data collected through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. After reformulation of the desire scale items, the finalized scale is verified with four separate methods of verification: (1) nomological validity, (2) discriminant validity, (3) convergent validity,

and (4) common method variance. After completion of the above steps and confidence in the strength of our scale, we finally proceed into empirical model testing of the Compulsive Consumption Development Model.

#### Theoretical Foundation.

The first stage in scale development entails a complete understanding of the theoretical foundation as related to the concept under construction. As illustrated in the literature review on desire, minimal scholarship exists on the conceptualization of desire as a force within the marketplace. Belk et al. (2003) put forth the biggest contribution through their qualitative discovery of what ‘desire’ means to consumers. While the piece has several hundred citations, minimal scale development work on desire has been done prior to this dissertation in furthering our understanding of what it means to “passionately consume” (327).

Of additional concern, there is substantial use of the term ‘desire’ within the marketing literature, yet the defining factors of such a construct appear to be assumed. A simple scholarly search of ‘desire and marketing’ and a content analysis of the citation count for Belk et al. (2003) produce thousands of hits. When exploring these articles, however, it is frequently seen that the word ‘desire’ is used synonymously with the word ‘want’ and not as conceptually illustrated by Belk et al. (2003), who describe desire as a passionate, overwhelming need. Further, many articles seek to understand an alternative concept that consumers are proposed to desire (e.g., uniqueness) rather than understanding the nature of desire within that relationship. From this end, survey items within these articles assume one’s understanding of desire and are thus often structured

as, “How much do you desire X?” As such, we propose Consumer Shopping Desire to be conceptualized as the extent to which a consumer experiences strong feelings of hedonic value towards components within the marketing space, including both the purchased object and the purchasing experience.

### Item Selection

Item selection and scale development for the Consumer Shopping Desire Scale went through an iterative process before determining the scale was sufficient for use in model testing. We seek to develop a scale that uncovers the multidimensionality of desire within the marketplace by acknowledging both the purchasing object and experience. As consumers navigate the shopping schema, there exist two components: (1) the physical and (2) the emotional (Babin and Babin 2001). It is imperative to measure both components of the shopping schema, as consumer value systems are subjective and thus often focus on differing elements. By understanding and identifying the multiple components within any given marketing exchange, researchers are better able to understand consumer decision making and motivating drivers within the marketing environment.

The survey was first developed with a total of 47 items devised individually by the research team in order to encapsulate all possible variations related to both the shopping experience and the shopping item. Developed items were derived from both academic and popular press sources, as well as qualitative evidence uncovered concurrently in Study 2. The research team then came together to compare the developed items and deleted any items that were either too similar or could not be agreed upon by both individuals. This left a total of 27 items, as seen in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**  
**Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Factor Analysis, Iteration #1**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	
1. The feeling I experience after buying impulsively is something I often want to feel again.	.53	-.18
2. I want to go shopping the most when I'm in a bad mood or I've had a bad day.	.68	-.16
3. I don't mind that I buy impulsively because I enjoy the products I end up with.	.33	.75
4. My desires to shop are satisfied even if I buy items that I don't actually need.	.61	-.14
5. I really want the object that I am shopping for.	-.20	.43
6. I enjoyed my last shopping trips, so I know I will enjoy my future shopping trips.	.54	.25
7. Once I feel the desire to shop, there is no ignoring it.	.72	.18
8. My desires to go shopping are more intense than they used to be.	.78	.12
9. I get excited about items I purchased, even if I didn't originally plan on buying anything.	.19	.63
10. I would describe my urges to go shopping as a burning desire.	.58	.09
11. I like the feeling I get after I buy something impulsively.	.17	.61
12. I only shop when I really want to buy a particular item.	-.62	.22
13. I go shopping because I know I will experience pleasure after buying an item.	.54	.03
14. I know shopping will make me feel good.	.77	-.11
15. I shop because there are items that I just have to own.	.40	.48
16. It's not that I want or need an item, it's that I have to have it.	.11	.82
17. I often experience a strong desire to go shopping.	.81	.09
18. Shopping is fun because I find items that I really want.	.62	.34
19. A shopping trip is unsuccessful if I do not get item that I set out to buy.	-.04	.48
20. Even if I buy items that weren't on my shopping list, I get pleasure out of them anyway.	.33	.68
21. I would describe myself as passionate about shopping.	.62	.22
22. I really desire the item that I leave home to buy.	.08	.79
23. My desire to buy a product increases when I can	.11	.39

see it or touch it.		
24. Shopping is all about that item I just have to get.	-.27	.73
25. I get more pleasure out of shopping now than I used to.	.76	-.06
26. I enjoy shopping more than I used to.	.72	.10
27. I often buy products that my friends have too.	.30	.20

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

After total item generation, exploratory factor analysis is employed to eliminate statistically weak and/or related items. Such beginning assessment of the desire scale utilized a pretest sample of 120 undergraduate students awarded course credit for survey completion. After all surveys were collected and coded, principal component exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation was used on the 27 desire-related items in Table 4.1 (see also weights for each factor loading). Items were retained if they loaded .50 or more on one of the two hypothesized factors (Floyd and Widaman 1995), thus eliminating five items (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2**  
**Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Refinement, Iteration #1**

Item	Factor Loading		' $\alpha$ ' if item is deleted
1. The feeling I experience after buying impulsively is something I often want to feel again.	.53	-.18	.81
2. I want to go shopping the most when I'm in a bad mood or I've had a bad day.	.68	-.16	.80
3. I don't mind that I buy impulsively because I enjoy the products I end up with.	.33	.75	.79
4. My desires to shop are satisfied even if I buy items that I don't actually need.	.61	-.14	.83
5. I enjoyed my last shopping trips, so I know I will enjoy my future shopping trips.	.54	.25	.80
6. Once I feel the desire to shop, there is no	.72	.18	.79



ignoring it.			
7. My desires to go shopping are more intense than they used to be.	.78	.12	.79
8. I get excited about items I purchased, even if I didn't originally plan on buying anything.	.19	.63	.76
9. I would describe my urges to go shopping as a burning desire.	.58	.09	.80
10. I like the feeling I get after I buy something impulsively.	.17	.61	.81
11. I only shop when I really want to buy a particular item.	-.62	.22	.87
12. I go shopping because I know I will experience pleasure after buying an item.	.54	.03	.83
13. I know shopping will make me feel good.	.77	-.11	.79
14. It's not that I want or need an item, it's that I have to have it.	.11	.82	.78
15. I often experience a strong desire to go shopping.	.81	.09	.79
16. Shopping is fun because I find items that I really want.	.62	.34	.90
17. Even if I buy items that weren't on my shopping list, I get pleasure out of them anyway.	.33	.68	.78
18. I would describe myself as passionate about shopping.	.62	.22	.80
19. I really desire the item that I leave home to buy.	.08	.79	.87
20. Shopping is all about that item I just have to get.	-.27	.73	.84
21. I get more pleasure out of shopping now than I used to.	.76	-.06	.91
22. I enjoy shopping more than I used to.	.72	.10	.90

The second iteration of factor analysis contained the remaining 22 items. As an additional method of reliability, we sought to examine the  $\alpha$ -coefficient for the scale if each item was deleted separately, seeking to raise the current alpha-coefficient of .82. In seeking to increase the alpha-coefficient for the scale in totality, we eliminated items according to 'α if item is deleted.' From this, we deleted items 4, 11, 12, 19, 20, 21, and 22, leaving fifteen remaining scale items. After eliminating these seven items, we next

evaluated the loadings of the two representative factors, eliminating any item with a loading  $< .50$ . This left only one more item to be deleted: Item 16. From here, we see the final scale to have fourteen items with two factors illustrating (1) desire for an object and (2) desire for an experience, with  $\alpha = .91$ . With eight items deleted in iteration two, we find our scale to be sufficient in continuing on to a confirmatory factor analysis (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3**  
**Consumer Shopping Desire Scale, Iteration #1**

Desire for the Experience Items
1. I want to go shopping the most when I'm in a bad mood or I've had a bad day.
2. I enjoyed my last shopping trips, so I know I will enjoy my future shopping trips.
3. Once I feel the desire to shop, there is no ignoring it.
4. My desires to go shopping are more intense than they used to be.
5. I know shopping will make me feel good.
6. I often experience a strong desire to go shopping.
7. I would describe my urges to go shopping as a burning desire.
8. I would describe myself as passionate about shopping.
Desire for the Object Items
1. I like the feeling I get after I buy something impulsively.
2. Even if I buy items that weren't on my shopping list, I get pleasure out of them anyway.
3. I get excited about items I purchased, even if I didn't originally plan on buying anything.
4. I don't mind that I buy impulsively because I enjoy the products I end up with.
5. The feeling I experience after buying impulsively is something I often want to feel again.
6. It's not that I want or need an item, it's that I have to have it.

\* based on 5-point Strongly Agree/Strongly Disagree Likert Scale

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The final step in scale development is to perform a confirmatory factor analysis to ensure that the given items load appropriately on the theorized constructs. Confirmatory

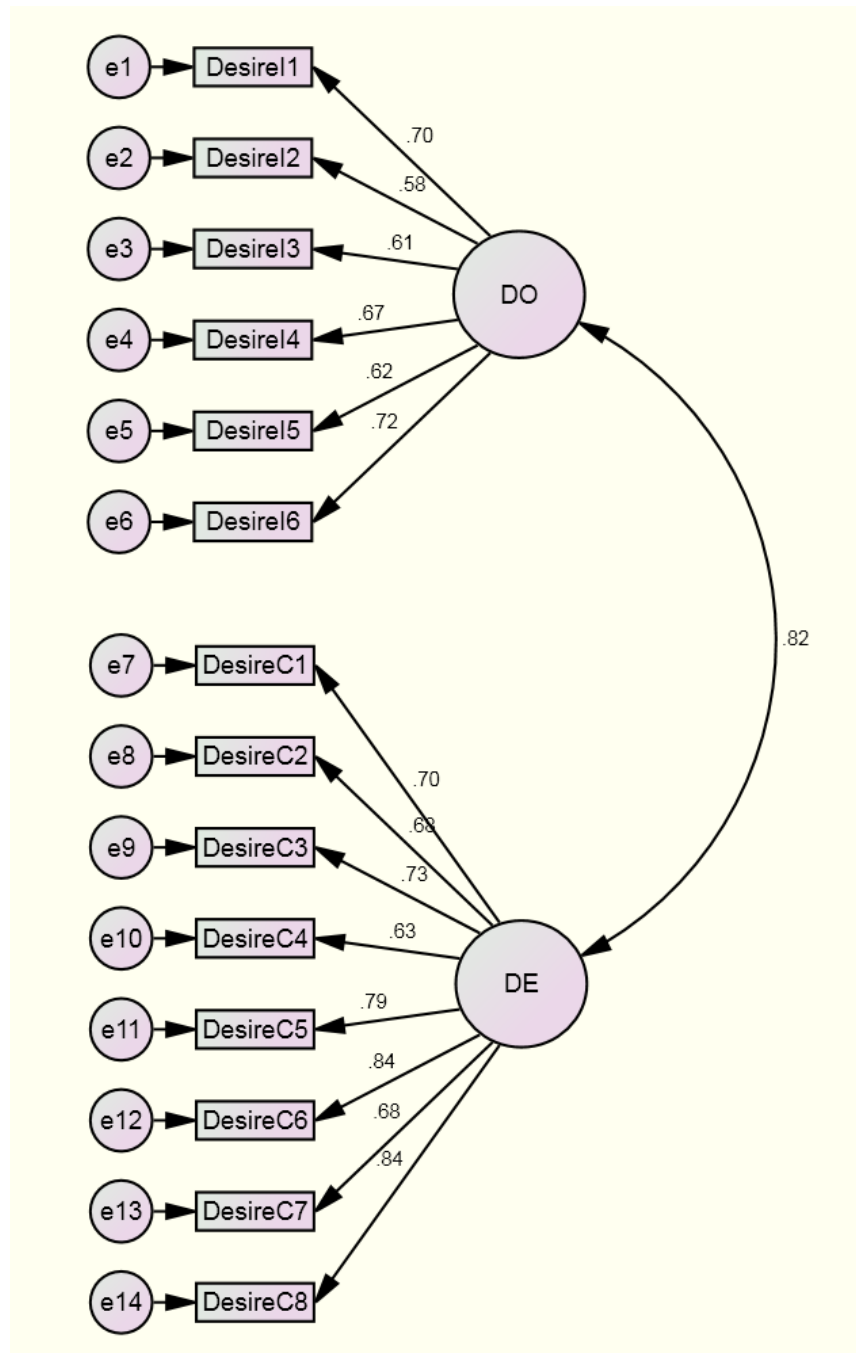
factor analyses were employed using an increased student sample of 305 participants. Additional participants were collected to generate a more robust analyses and stronger statistical power for the confirmatory scale test (see Churchill 1979). Again, said sample consisted of students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who were offered course credit for the completion of the survey in full. Although primarily used as a convenience sample, a student sample provides for appropriate study design as they maintain individualistic consumption behaviors and have experience in the marketplace. Demographically, the sample collected was 62.2% male and 37.8% female (n=305), which, while not an equal proportion of both sexes, maintains a large enough sample size to allow for appropriate analysis reflective of the general population. Full demographical information is presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4**  
**Demographics of Survey Development Respondents, Iteration #1**

		%
Sex	Male	62.2
	Female	37.8
Year in College	Freshman	.3
	Sophomore	1.9
	Junior	66.1
	Senior	31.4
	Graduate Student	.3
Family Income	\$0-25,000	11.1
	\$25,001-50,000	9.5
	\$50,001-\$75,000	14.8
	\$75,001-100,000	22.3
	\$100,001+	42.3
Average Age	21.18	

The AMOS statistical program was used for the confirmatory factor analysis component of scale development. We began with a complete, two-factored model with eight items for Experience-Focused Desire and six items comprising Object-Focused Desire (see Figure 4.1). Observing just the full model, we see some major issues. First, we find a correlation between object-focused desire and experience-focused desire that is too high for discriminant validity purposes ( $r = .82$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Although the standardized regression weights for each item loading are at a suitable level, we fail to find appropriate model fit according to fit indices. As such, we find a large, significant chi-square measure ( $\chi^2 = 260.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ), a large  $\chi^2 / DF$  (3.43), a low CFI (.904), and a high RMSEA (.095).

**Figure 4.1**  
**Confirmatory Factor Analysis Full Desire Model, Iteration #1**



To help gain better fit, we constrained several error terms, as well as deleted items that were highly correlated to other items within the measurement model (see Table 4.5 for item relationships). Taking a look at the standardized residuals for the covariance in

Table 4.5, we deleted items: DI3, DI4, DI6, DC4, and DC5. Observing standardized residuals in an ad hoc manner provides us with an assessment of which relationships between variables are not well accounted for by the model, with larger numbers indicating weaker model relationships. As observed in Table 4.5, the five deleted items are found to have several residuals with other items greater than 1. Such results indicate item weakness. With these items deleted we were able to establish moderately good model fit ( $\chi^2 = 73.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2 / DF = 2.82$ ,  $CFI = .96$ ,  $RMSEA = .08$ ).

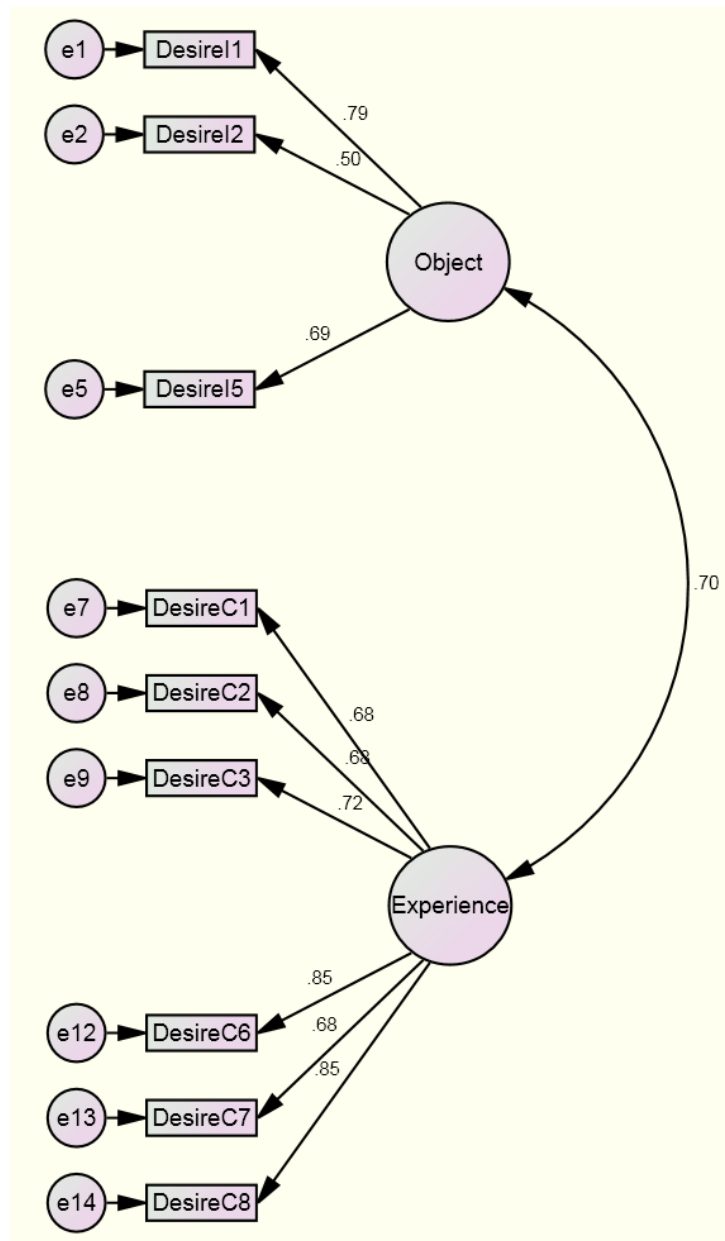
**Table 4.5**  
**Standardized Residual Covariance Table, Iteration #1**

	DC8	DC7	DC6	DC5	DC4	DC3	DC2	DC1	DI6	DI5	DI4	DI3	DI2	DI1
DC8	.00													
DC7	-.37	.00												
DC6	.00	-.51	.00											
DC5	.59	-.91	.18	.00										
DC4	.34	.85	-.04	.61	.00									
DC3	-.08	.83	.36	-.90	-.77	.00								
DC2	.12	-.30	.64	-.08	-1.22	.12	.00							
DC1	.45	.71	-.47	-.05	-.42	.35	-.11	.00						
DI6	-.43	1.50	.37	.69	1.75	.78	-1.42	.66	.00					
DI5	-.25	-.97	-.04	.91	-.66	-.28	.23	-.31	.03	.00				
DI4	-1.49	.02	-1.03	-.98	-.97	-.70	1.49	-1.05	-.35	.99	.00			
DI3	-.61	-.84	.30	1.18	.10	.16	1.09	-1.28	-.49	-.58	.90	.00		
DI2	-.89	-.67	.34	.66	-.29	.60	1.06	-.50	-.53	-.89	.76	.00	.00	
DI1	-.65	.01	-.78	.25	-.89	.35	.83	-.50	-.72	.00	1.53	-.05	.35	.00

Despite the improved model fit (see Figure 4.2), a look at the Standardized Residual Covariances persists to show high residuals between the measurement items, as well as a high covariance between object-focused and experience-focused desire of .70. Further, the standardized regression weights within the object-focused desire construct drop to unacceptable levels after deleting the three items. We continue to uncover troubling relationships between the two constructs that cannot be fixed through traditional means of scale refinement. As we were unable to truly purify the measure

(Churchill 1979), we believed it to be necessary to go back to the drawing board and reformulate our scale development procedures with newly constructed measurement items.

**Figure 4.2**  
**Modified Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Iteration #1**



In a needed attempt to continue scale development procedures, significant changes were made to the first developed Consumer Shopping Desire scale. As such, the researchers came together to devise more measurement items. Starting with the 14 desire items refined in the above exploratory factor analysis, we added 29 additional items. We believed these items to be more detailed and specifically aligned with Consumer Shopping Desire to help differentiate our developed construct from other similar variables, such as impulsivity and compulsivity, as well as between the two separate desire factors. Developed items were derived from both academic and popular press sources, as well as qualitative evidence uncovered in Study 2. The research team then came together to compare the developed items and deleted any items that were either too similar or could not be agreed upon by both individuals. This left a total of 38 items, as seen in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6**  
**Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Factor Analysis, Iteration #2**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>		
1. I like to go shopping to be a part of the environment.	.89	-.07	.42
2. I want to go shopping to be a part of the environment.	.90	.01	.42
3. I want to go shopping the most when I'm in a bad mood or I've had a bad day.	.52	-.12	.42
4. I know being in the shopping environment will make me feel good.	.79	-.02	.56
5. I enjoy shopping even if I don't buy anything.	.73	-.16	.55
6. When I'm in a bad mood, I know going to the mall will make me feel better.	.79	.12	.45
7. I would describe myself as passionate about shopping.	.82	.09	.45
8. I would describe myself as knowledgeable about shopping.	.55	.29	.38
9. I like to go shopping for reasons other than	.74	-.10	.58



to buy something.			
10. I like to go shopping even if I don't need anything.	.64	-.29	.46
11. I like to go shopping three or more days a week.	.57	-.05	.28
12. If I could go shopping three or more days a week, I would.	.60	-.11	.37
13. I would like to work at the mall.	.41	.22	.31
14. Once I feel the desire to shop, there is no ignoring it.	.79	.14	.44
15. I only shop when I really want to buy a particular item.	.26	-.84	.19
16. I often experience a strong desire to go shopping.	.87	.08	.46
17. I often experience a strong desire to go to the mall.	.88	.10	.44
18. I feel excitement several days before a planned shopping trip.	.79	.16	.41
19. I plan shopping trips days in advance.	.63	.50	.39
20. I like the feeling I get after I buy something impulsively.	.63	.02	.79
21. Even if I buy items that weren't on my shopping list, I get pleasure out of them anyway.	.39	.00	.90
22. I get excited about items I purchased, even if I didn't originally plan on buying anything.	.43	-.04	.83
23. I don't mind that I buy impulsively because I enjoy the products I end up with.	.52	.16	.88
24. The feeling I experience after buying impulsively is something I often want to feel again.	.67	-.03	.81
25. It's not that I want or need an item, it's that I have to have it.	.70	.12	.63
26. My desires to shop are satisfied even if I buy items that I don't actually need.	.39	-.10	.69
27. I really want the object that I am shopping for.	.23	.66	.25
28. I only shop when I really want to buy a particular item.	-.09	.86	-.22
29. I shop because there are items that I just have to own.	.69	.29	.47
30. Shopping is fun because I find items that I really want.	.67	.13	.55
31. A shopping trip is unsuccessful if I do not get item that I set out to buy.	.05	.45	.20

32. My desire to buy a product increases when I can see it or touch it.	.34	.06	.44
33. Shopping is all about that item I just have to get.	.47	.50	.13
34. I like to browse stores to see what new items I find.	.69	-.12	.52
35. I often buy items near the check-out counter.	.49	.30	.39
36. I show off what I buy to my friends and/or family.	.56	.15	.13
37. Shopping is more enjoyable when I see items I want.	.25	.19	.47
38. I know I want an item when I see it.	.48	.19	.44

After total item generation, exploratory factor analysis was employed to eliminate statistically weak and/or related items. Rather than a student sample as previously utilized for item refinement, we opted towards an individual consumer sample<sup>1</sup> consisting of 91 participants obtained through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Each participant was paid \$.75 for survey completion in full. After data were collected, we began with a principal component exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation on the 38 desire-related items in Table 4.6. Items were deleted if they loaded less than .8 on any of the three uncovered factors (Floyd and Widaman 1995), thus eliminating 28 items. Further, two items were deleted that loaded higher than .8 on the second factor, as two items are not sufficient for single construct measurement. As these remaining nine items factored cleanly into two factors (see Table 4.7), we next analyzed scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha, finding  $\alpha = .935$ .

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the unfavorable results of the first scale development, we opted away from a student sample to eliminate any response biases characteristic of student responses.

**Table 4.7**  
**Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Factor Analysis #2, Iteration #2**

Item	Factor Loading	
1. I like to go shopping to be a part of the environment.	.89	.42
2. I want to go shopping to be a part of the environment.	.90	.42
3. I would describe myself as passionate about shopping.	.82	.45
4. I often experience a strong desire to go shopping.	.87	.46
5. I often experience a strong desire to go to the mall.	.88	.44
6. Even if I buy items that weren't on my shopping list, I get pleasure out of them anyway.	.39	.90
7. I get excited about items I purchased, even if I didn't originally plan on buying anything.	.43	.83
8. I don't mind that I buy impulsively because I enjoy the products I end up with.	.52	.88
9. The feeling I experience after buying impulsively is something I often want to feel again.	.67	.81

As can be seen in Table 4.8, each factor pinpoints a very specific behavior. First, the items grouped within Factor 1 point to behaviors driven by passion and recognition of the shopping experience. As we are seeking to quantify the conceptualizations of Belk et al. (2003), we find close alignment between these items and the discussions of truly unwavering desires within the consumption domain. These items in Factor 1 express emotions of planning, anticipation, and craving. Alternatively, the second factor highlights feelings surrounding impulsive behaviors. These items address both a retrospective and objective accounts of impulsivity within one's shopping experience, with a substantial focus on enjoyment of the consumption object.

**Table 4.8**  
**Two Factors from Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Refinement**

<p>Factor 1 – Desire for the Shopping Experience</p> <p>Desire1: I like to go shopping to be a part of the environment.  Desire2: I want to go shopping to be a part of the environment.  Desire7: I would describe myself as passionate about shopping.  Desire16: I often experience a strong desire to go shopping.  Desire17: I often experience a strong desire to go to the mall.</p> <p>Factor 2 – Desire for the Shopping Object</p> <p>Desire21: Even if I buy items that weren't on my shopping list, I get pleasure out of them anyway.  Desire22: I get excited about items I purchased, even if I didn't originally plan on buying anything.  Desire23: I don't mind that I buy impulsively because I enjoy the products I end up with.  Desire24: The feeling I experience after buying impulsively is something I often want to feel again.</p>
--

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

With item selection clarified and two factors defined, we again sought to assess confirmatory factor analyses using a larger consumer. To this end, a sample of 587 individuals was collected through Amazon's Mechanical Turk Program and each was paid \$0.75 each for accurate completion of the survey in full. A total of 668 surveys were completed, however 99 were eliminated because the respondent either (a) completed the survey in less than 300 seconds, or (b) failed one or more of the attention checks included in the survey. Attention checks were incorporated into the survey to ensure that the participants were thoroughly reading each item and responding appropriately. Two attention measures were put in place. First, an item was placed on each page of the survey instructing the respondent to select a specific answer (e.g.,

“Please select Strongly Agree”). If the participant did not respond correctly, they were eliminated. Secondly, respondents were provided with a confirmation number at the conclusion of the survey; this number was to be entered into Mechanical Turk to receive credit for survey completion. If the confirmation number did not match the number on their survey, the participant’s responses were eliminated.

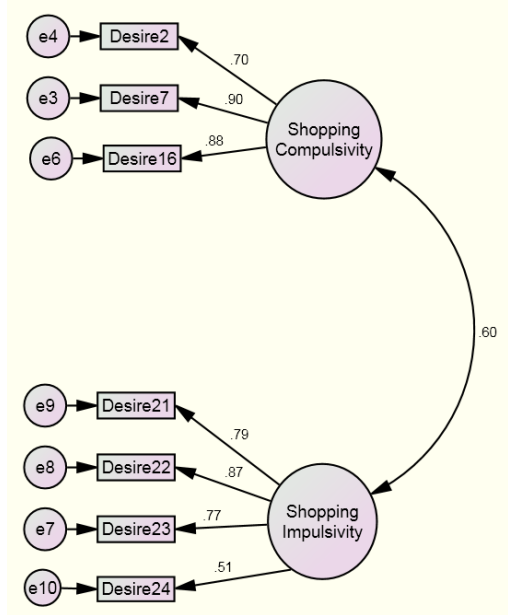
Demographically, the sample collected is 39.4% male and 60.6% female (n = 587), with an average age of 35 years old. While not an equal proportion of both sexes, the survey maintains a large enough sample size to allow for appropriate analysis reflective of the general population. Further, a larger sample of female respondents is, in fact, beneficial, as the phenomenon under investigation is most directly relevant to female consumers (O’Guinn and Faber 1989). Additionally, the sample is comprised primarily of Non-Hispanic White consumers (79.4%) (the rest is equally split among the remaining ethnic backgrounds), with approximately 73% of the respondent base having completed part or all of an undergraduate 4-year degree. Notably, the most equally distributed participant grouping is observed with total annual household income with the highest grouping constituting 20% of the sample population, for both those earning < \$20,000 and \$50,001-\$75,000. This even distribution is favorable, as annual household income may potentially confound one’s (in)ability to develop compulsive shopping behaviors. See full demographical information in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9**  
**Demographics of Study 1 Survey Respondents, Iteration #2**

		<u>%</u>
<u>Sex</u>	Male	39.4
	Female	60.0
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	Hispanic or Latino	3.9
	Non-Hispanic White	79.4
	American Indian or Alaska Native	.7
	Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	.2
	Asian or Asian American	8.7
	Black or African American	5.1
	Prefer not to answer	2.0
<u>Annual HH Income</u>	\$0-20,000	20.8
	\$20,001 - \$30,000	15.2
	\$30,001 - \$40,000	13.3
	\$40,001 - \$50,000	10.6
	\$50,001 - \$75,000	20.3
	\$75,001 - \$100,000	9.2
	\$100,001 - \$150,000	7.3
	\$150,001 +	3.4
<u>Marital Status</u>	Single/Never Married	50.1
	Married	35.9
	Separated	1.0
	Divorced	10.7
	Widowed	1.4
	Prefer not to answer	.9
<u>Education</u>	Some High School	1.4
	High School Graduate	11.2
	Some College	31.7
	2-year College Degree	9.9
	Undergraduate Degree	31
	Master's Degree	12.1
	Doctoral Degree	.7
	Professional Degree	2.0
<u>Average Age</u>	35	

To begin, a confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS statistical software was utilized; however, primary analyses indicated poor model fit ( $\chi^2 = 179.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2 / DF = 13.77$ ; CFI = .92; RMSEA = .15) (see Figure 4.3 and Table 4.10). As can be seen between Table 4.8 and Table 4.10, items Desire 1 and Desire 12 were eliminated from the model due to high similarity in wording and concept between the two items; such repetition is unnecessary and confounded the scale with excessive correlation. To improve model fit, we first observed item estimates to evaluate the validity of the items in relation to the measurement model. As we see a low estimate between Shopping Impulsivity and Desire 24 (.51) we eliminated this item from the model. After elimination of Desire 24, we reran the confirmatory factor analysis finding good model fit ( $\chi^2 = 30.98$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2 / DF = 3.87$ ; CFI = .98; RMSEA = .07). Despite a slightly high RMSEA value, we find appropriate model fit measures using three additional indicators (see Figure 4.4, Table 4.11).

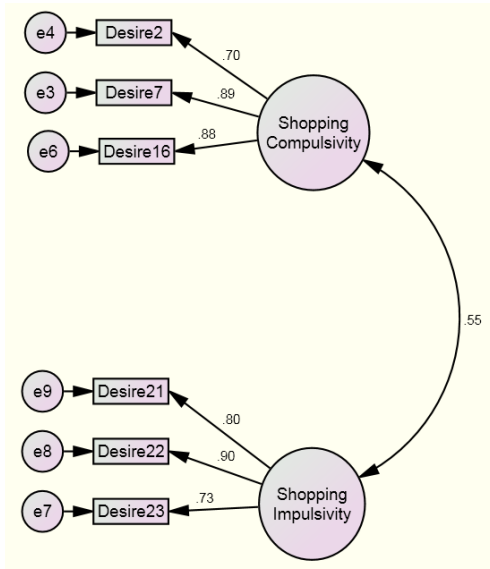
**Figure 4.3**  
**Confirmatory Factor Analysis Full Desire Model, Iteration #2**



**Table 4.10**  
**Standardized Regression Weights for Full Desire Construct, Iteration #2**

Pathway	Estimate	p-value
Shopping Compulsivity → Desire 2	.70	< .001
Shopping Compulsivity → Desire 7	.90	< .001
Shopping Compulsivity → Desire 16	.88	< .001
Shopping Impulsivity → Desire 21	.79	< .001
Shopping Impulsivity → Desire 22	.87	< .001
Shopping Impulsivity → Desire 23	.77	< .001
Shopping Impulsivity → Desire 24	.51	< .001

**Figure 4.4**  
**Modified Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Iteration #2**



**Table 4.11**  
**Standardized Regression Weights for Final Scale**

Pathway	Estimate	p-value
Shopping Compulsivity → Desire2	.70	< .001
Shopping Compulsivity → Desire7	.89	< .001
Shopping Compulsivity → Desire16	.88	< .001
Shopping Impulsivity → Desire21	.80	< .001
Shopping Impulsivity → Desire22	.90	< .001
Shopping Impulsivity → Desire 23	.73	< .001



Now that the scale has been defined, developed, and refined, the final component of the scale development process dictates assessments of validity (Peter 1981).

Accordingly, we walk through several different assessments of validity, including (a) nomological validity, (b) discriminant validity, (c) convergent validity, and (d) common method variance (see Table 4.12).

**Table 4.12**  
**Consumer Shopping Desire Scale Validity Test<sup>2</sup>**

Validity Test	No. Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Reliability	Correlation with Desire for Obj.	Correlation with Desire for Exp.
<b>Nomological Validity</b>						
<i>Impulse-Focused Desire Factor</i>	3	12.16	4.10	.85	-	.49**
Impulsivity	9	19.93	7.3	.92	.54**	.55**
Materialism	18	66.50	18.03	.91	.47**	.55**
Positive Affect	10	24.72	8.89	.91	.38**	.38**
<i>Compulse-Focused Desire Factor</i>	3	7.97	4.33	.86	.49**	-
Compulsivity	7	1.25	1.59	.77	.37**	.42**
<b>Convergent Validity</b>						
Hedonic Shopping Value	11	30.32	9.58	.92	.53**	.68**
Consumer Spending Self-Control	10	5.38	.89	.88	-.21**	-.22**
<b>Discriminant Validity</b>						
Utilitarian Shopping Value	4	14.87	2.9	.66	-.03	-.14*

\*\*  $p < .001$

\*  $p < .01$

### Nomological Validity

To begin, nomological validity is used to ensure the developed scale correlates with other constructs in a theoretically-predicted manner (Ridgway et al. 2008) and will

<sup>2</sup> Validity measures use data collected from the general population using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (n = 587)

be assessed by four constructs often discussed within the literature on desire: (1) impulsivity, (2) materialism, (3) compulsivity, and (4) positive affect.

*Impulsivity* Impulsivity was measured using a 7-item scale (Rook and Fisher 1995) with an internal consistency reliability of .92. There was a significant relationship between impulsivity and object-focused desire ( $r = .54, p < .001$ ), illustrating that there exists a relationship between high impulsivity and high object-focused desire in the shopping environment.

*Materialism* Materialism was measured using an 18-item scale (Richins 2004) with an internal consistency reliability of .91. There was a significant correlation between materialism and object-focused desire ( $r = .47, p < .001$ ), illustrating that there exists a relationship between high materialistic tendencies and substantial focus on consumption objects within the shopping environment.

*Positive Affect* Positive affect was measured using a 10-item feelings measure as part of the composite PANAS scale (Watson et al. 1988). Internal consistency reliability for these data was .91. There was a significant correlation between object-focused desire and positive affect ( $r = .38, p < .001$ ) indicating that those individuals experiencing high levels of CSD in the marketplace were also likely to experience high levels of positive affect.

*Compulsivity* Compulsivity was measured using a 7-item scale (Faber and O'Guinn 1992) with an internal consistency reliability of .77. There was a significant relationship between compulsivity and experience-focused desire ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ),

illustrating that there exists a relationship between compulsivity buying tendencies and high desire for the shopping environment.

Although we do find the hoped for relationships between both object- and experience-focused desire and their respective related constructs, we find unpredicted correlations in comparing the relationships between object- and experience-focused desires. For example, although a positive relationship exists between materialism and object-focused desire, we actually find a stronger relationship between materialism and experience-focused desire. While each factor within the Consumer Shopping Desire scale should be measuring their distinct behaviors within the marketplace as theorized in Chapter 2, this finding is likely do to the significant presence within the retail environment exhibited by compulsive consumers. It is assumed that shopping more would inevitably lead to more object-awareness (i.e., temptation) and thus more materialistic tendencies and feelings. Further, prior literature suggests that compulsive buyers manifest a very high level of materialism as part of their trait-based nature (Faber and O'Guinn 2008).

### Convergent Validity

The next form of validity is to ensure the designed construct is measuring what it is purporting to measure, through which we used both Hedonic Shopping Value (Babin et al. 1994) and Consumer Spending Self-Control (Haws, Bearden and Nenkov 2012). As such, we find a significant correlation between Hedonic Shopping Value and both object-focused ( $r = .53, p < .001$ ) and experience-focused ( $r = .68, p < .001$ ) desire. Further, the stronger relationship between experience-focused desire and hedonic shopping value is

consistent with our conceptualization that experience-focused desire is much more of a pleasurable experience, highlighting the excitement one feels from mere participation in a shopping exercise. We are confident in using the scale for validation purposes as we find high scale reliability of .92.

We also seek to assess convergent validity using the Consumer Spending Self-Control scale (CSSC), measured by a 10-item scale with internal consistency reliability of .88. In line with Belk et al. (2003), we believe that Consumer Shopping Desire should be distinct from controlled behaviors in that consumer desire is characterized by “imbalance and being out of control” (337), as it is described as a force of passion and uncontrollable want. Accordingly, we find a negative, significant correlation between Consumer Shopping Desire and CSSC for both object-focused ( $r = -.21, p < .001$ ) and experience-focused ( $r = -.22, < .001$ ) desire, indicating that those individuals experiencing high levels of Consumer Shopping Desire in the marketplace maintain a low (i.e., opposite) ability to control spending. This confirms the presence of convergent validity for the Consumer Shopping Desire scale within the extant marketing literature.

#### Discriminant Validity

The final form of validity necessary to evaluate the appropriateness of a scale is discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is used to verify that the developed scale is distinct from similar, yet conceptually different constructs. To assess this form of validity, the relationship between Consumer Shopping Desire and Utilitarian Shopping Value Scale (Babin et al. 1994) is evaluated.

First, we find discriminant validity between Utilitarian Shopping Value and both object-focused ( $r = -.03$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and experience-focused ( $r = -.14$ ,  $p < .01$ ) desire, with an internal validity for Utilitarian Shopping Value at  $\alpha = .88$ . Further, we see a significant, negative relationship between the aforementioned construct and experience-focused desire, indicating the lack of purpose and object-identification present within the latter stages of compulsivity development. We illustrate here a significant finding, as utilitarian shopping agendas are marketed by functional (rather than pleasurable) behaviors in the marketplace, thus further supporting our conceptualization of experience-focused desire. Thus, discriminant validity is confirmed.

#### Common Method Variance

The final test of scale development is to assess the presence of common method variance to establish that no biases have occurred from the collection of survey data. Utilizing CFA procedures, we loaded all items on to one factor (Podsakoff et al. 2003). If good model fit is uncovered through such analysis, it is plausible that survey respondents answered similarly to all items and, thus, did not provide truthful responses to the individual factor items. Using AMOS structural equation modeling software, we fail to find good model fit for any of the factor models, thus illustrating the absence of common method variance.

#### **Test of Proposed Model**

Although the process of scale development procedures took several rounds and multiple iterations of refinement, the confirmatory factor analyses above provide sufficient confidence for using the Consumer Shopping Desire scale for purposes of

model testing. Accordingly, a survey consisting of seven pre-established scales (see Table 4.13 for scales used in data collection) was administered to the general population sample of 587 individuals described above. As explored within Study 2, it became clear that there are distinct differences between the two scales used to measure compulsive buying tendencies. As we found disconcerting results as to the true value of Ridgway et al.'s (2008) ability to measure compulsivity as described within the extant literature base, we chose to measure compulsivity based on the scale developed by Faber and O'Guinn (1992).

**Table 4.13**  
**Scales Used in Model Testing**

<b>Measurement Scale</b>	<b>Citation</b>
Buying Impulsiveness	Rook and Fisher (1995)
Compulsive Buying	Faber and O'Guinn (1992)
PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect)	Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988)
Consumer Shopping Value	Babin et al. (1994)
Consumer Spending Self-control	Bearden and Haws (2012)
Consumer Shopping Desire	Developed by Author (2011/2012)
Modified Life Events Checklist	Gray et al. (2004)

Once all surveys were collected and the data were cleaned for errors in attention or timeliness, multicollinearity was tested between all seven variables. Because of the strong correlation between some variables within the model (see Table 4.15), multicollinearity is of significant concern to ensure our path analyses are not confounded by statistically similar measures. Using a regression foundation, with compulsivity as the dependent variable and the remaining six variables as factor coefficients, we found the absence of multicollinearity among our variables (see Table 4.14). As such, we see that all variance inflation factors (VIFs) are below 3. We feel confident in this

multicollinearity assessment, as literature advises severe multicollinearity cases to possess a VIF above 10, with a suggested VIF below 5 (Cohen et al. 2003). Although we find the highest similarity between impulsivity and compulsivity, the results remain at an appropriate level; similarity is expected as compulsive consumers often exhibit impulsive tendencies.

**Table 4.14**  
**Test for Multicollinearity in Model**

Variable	VIF
Positive Affect	1.27
Impulsivity	2.69
Consumer Spending Self-Control	1.70
Object-Focused Desire	1.62
Experience-Focused Desire	1.63
Life Events	1.02

Next, the participants were grouped according to their level of impulsivity and compulsivity to aid between-groups analysis. First, impulsivity was split according to the median score, leaving those individuals scoring  $\leq 19$  to be deemed “minimally impulsive” ( $M = 14.39$ ,  $n = 308$ ) and those scoring  $\geq 20$  to be “highly impulsive” ( $M = 26.04$ ,  $n = 279$ ), with a significant difference in means between the two groups ( $t(307) = -61.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Compulsivity, however, was measured differently; rather than split by median score, we followed scale determined procedures, deeming those scoring  $> 1.34$  ‘compulsive’ ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $n = 39$ ) and those scoring  $\leq 1.34$  ‘not compulsive’ ( $M = -1.61$ ,  $n = 547$ ).<sup>3</sup> As such, we find 39 (6.7%) participants to be compulsive consumers.

Before delving into hypothesis testing, it is necessary to ensure both convergent and discriminant validity is present within the proposed measurement model. Using

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<sup>3</sup> Compulsivity scores were multiplied by -1 for consistency and understandability of statistical results.

procedures according to Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Fornell and Larcker (1981), we see that convergent validity exists between all five constructs in the model and their respective indicators, with all factors loading greater than .50.

Of greater concern to the authors, however, was the possible issue regarding discriminant validity. Such concerns are due to (a) the slightly high correlations between the variables under investigation (see Table 4.14), and (b) the difficult process experienced in determining two truly unique desire factors. As our first attempt at Desire measurement ended with a correlation between the factors of .70, it is possible that such constructs are too similar when placed within a measurement model. We find acceptable presence of discriminant validity between all constructs in the model except when comparing compulsivity to the correlation squared between itself and impulsivity (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

While this is undesirable, it may likely be explained by the trait-based nature of compulsivity encompassing impulsiveness (O'Guinn and Faber 1989). As compulsive consumers are inherently impulsive in nature, the structural model below may not be able to appropriately parcel out the nuanced differences between impulsive actions in the marketplace and trait-based impulsivity. As such, we see further need to test discriminant validity according to Anderson and Gerbing (1988) in evaluating  $\chi^2$  differences between the constrained and unconstrained model. All  $\chi^2$  differences are found to be significant (including between impulsivity and compulsivity), thus supporting the complete existence of discriminant validity.

### Hypothesis Testing



Beginning with simple correlations, we find a significant, positive correlation between impulsiveness and compulsive buying ( $r = .65, p < .001$ ) (see Table 4.14 for a correlation summary), with a significant difference in compulsivity scores between those high ( $M = -.52$ ) and low ( $M = -2.11$ ) in impulsivity ( $t(278) = 15.74, p < .001$ ). While not a hypothesized relationship, the established connection between impulsivity and compulsivity illustrates the related nature of the constructs, while also providing evidence of higher rates of compulsivity within impulsive consumers. From here, we are able to continue on to path analysis testing in hopes of uncovering a potential path towards compulsive shopping behaviors.

**Table 4.14**  
**Correlation Summary Table (n = 587)**

	1 Comp	2 Imp	3 Positive Affect	4 Negative Affect	5 CSSC	6 Desire Obj.	7 Desire Exp.	8 Hedon.	9 Utilit	10 Life Events
1	1									
2	.65**	1								
3	.28**	.33**	1							
4	.17**	.01	-.03	1						
5	-.49**	-.61**	-.06	.00	1					
6	.37**	.54**	.38**	-.12*	-.21**	1				
7	.45**	.55**	.38**	.04	-.22**	.49**	1			
8	.34**	.48**	.47**	-.1*	-.14**	.53**	.68**	1		
9	-.26**	-.21**	.08	-.19**	.21**	-.03	-.14*	.08	1	
10	.14**	.12*	.06	.12*	-.06	.10*	.05	.04	-.01*	1
Mean	1.36	19.93	24.72	17.31	5.78	11.52	11.02	30.32	14.9	2.49
St. Dev	1.59	7.3	8.89	7.78	.89	3.74	5.84	9.58	2.91	1.79

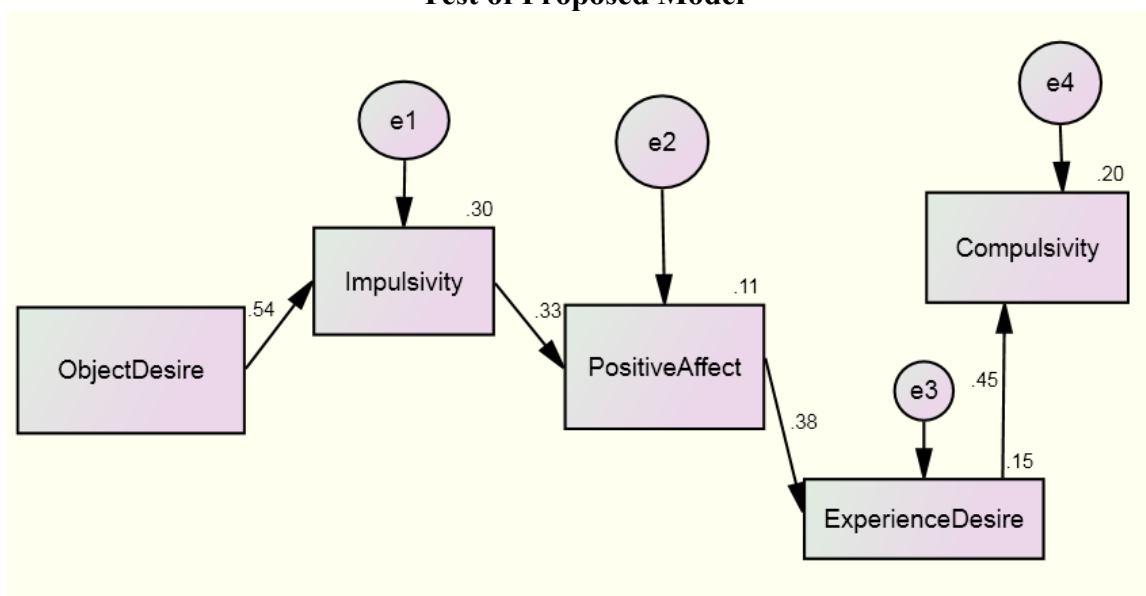
\*\* p-value < .001

\* p-value < .05

Using AMOS statistical software, we test our model in full to observe how the hypothesized pathways contribute to the model in its totality (see Figure 4.5). We begin with Hypothesis 1, in which we observe a significant pathway between object-focused desire and impulsivity indicating that object-focused desire is a contributing factor in impulsivity development ( $b = .54, p < .001$ ). Further, t-test analysis confirm our

theoretical contribution as highly impulsive consumers ( $M = 14.15$ ) experience significantly more object-focused desire than minimally impulsive consumers ( $M = 10.22$ ) ( $t(276) = 16.39, p < .001$ ). Thus, H1 is supported.

**Figure 4.5**  
**Test of Proposed Model**



With the beginning relationship in place, the next construct within the Compulsive Consumption Development model is positive affect. As positive affect is cited as the driver to learned behavior from instances of impulsive purchasing, it is necessary to establish a link between the two constructs. In support of the extant literature, we find a significant relationship by regressing positive affect on impulsivity, illustrating that a 1-point increase in impulsivity will likely lead to a .33 increase in feelings of positive affect. Further, we find that those high in impulsivity ( $M = 27.25$ ) experience significantly more positive affect than those scoring low ( $M = 22.42$ ) in impulsivity ( $t(307) = -9.95, p < .001$ ). The secondary role of positive affect as hypothesized in H2 is the role the construct plays in the development of experience-

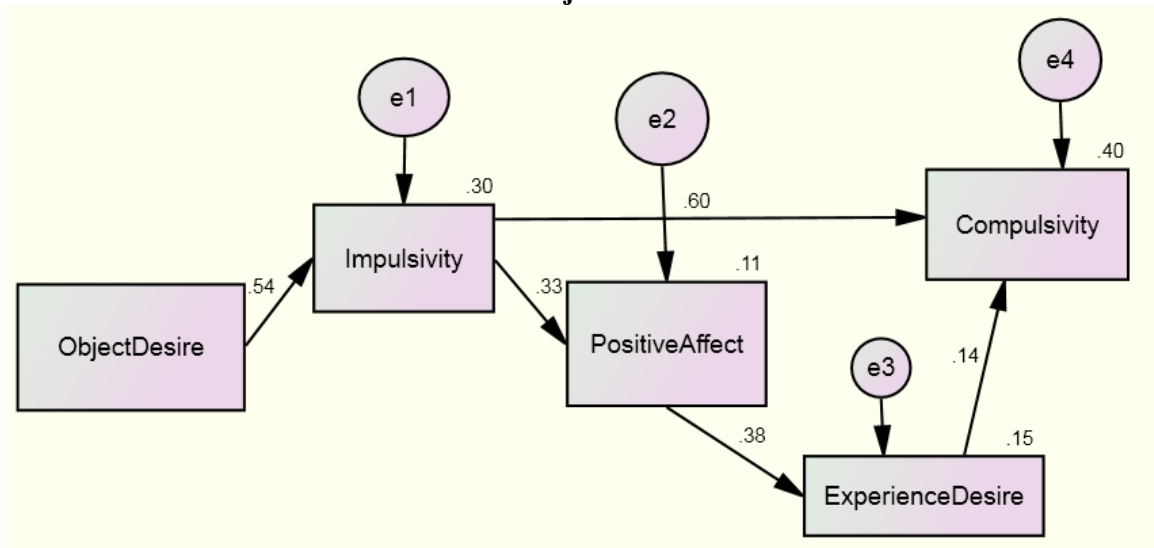
focused desire. Accordingly, we observe a significant pathway between positive affect and experience-focused desire ( $b = .38, p < .001$ ), thus supporting

The final pathway towards compulsivity development leads from experience-focused desire to compulsive buying tendencies. As experience-focused desire is conceptualized to be illustrative of an individual's emotional response within a moment of compulsivity, we find a significant correlation between experience-focused desire and compulsivity ( $r = .45, p < .001$ ) with a significant difference in desire levels between compulsive ( $M = 11.90$ ) and non-compulsive ( $M = 7.67$ ) consumers ( $t(546) = 23.60, p < .001$ ). Further, in support of hypothesis 3, we find a predictive relationship within our path model indicating that experience-focused desires increase compulsive purchasing behaviors ( $b = .45, p < .001$ ).

In assessing model fit, however, we fail to find appropriate model fit as dictated by Hu and Bentler (1999) ( $\chi^2 = 432.70, p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/DF = 76.06$ ; CFI = .54; RMSEA = .35). In exploring the modification indices for potential paths that may have been overlooked in theoretical model development, we find the path from impulsivity to compulsivity to potentially contribute greatly to the overall model fit. To explore model changes with the addition of such pathway, we seek a theoretical explanation for such relationships. As mentioned previously in various sections, the relationship between impulsivity and compulsivity is likely muddled. As compulsive consumers exhibit inherent impulsiveness, the path presented here may potentially be confounded within one another and thus difficult to separate. Taking impulsivity to stand as impulsive actions within the retail environment, it is plausible to predict that such behavior contributes to compulsivity development (see Hirschman 1992). Accordingly, we place

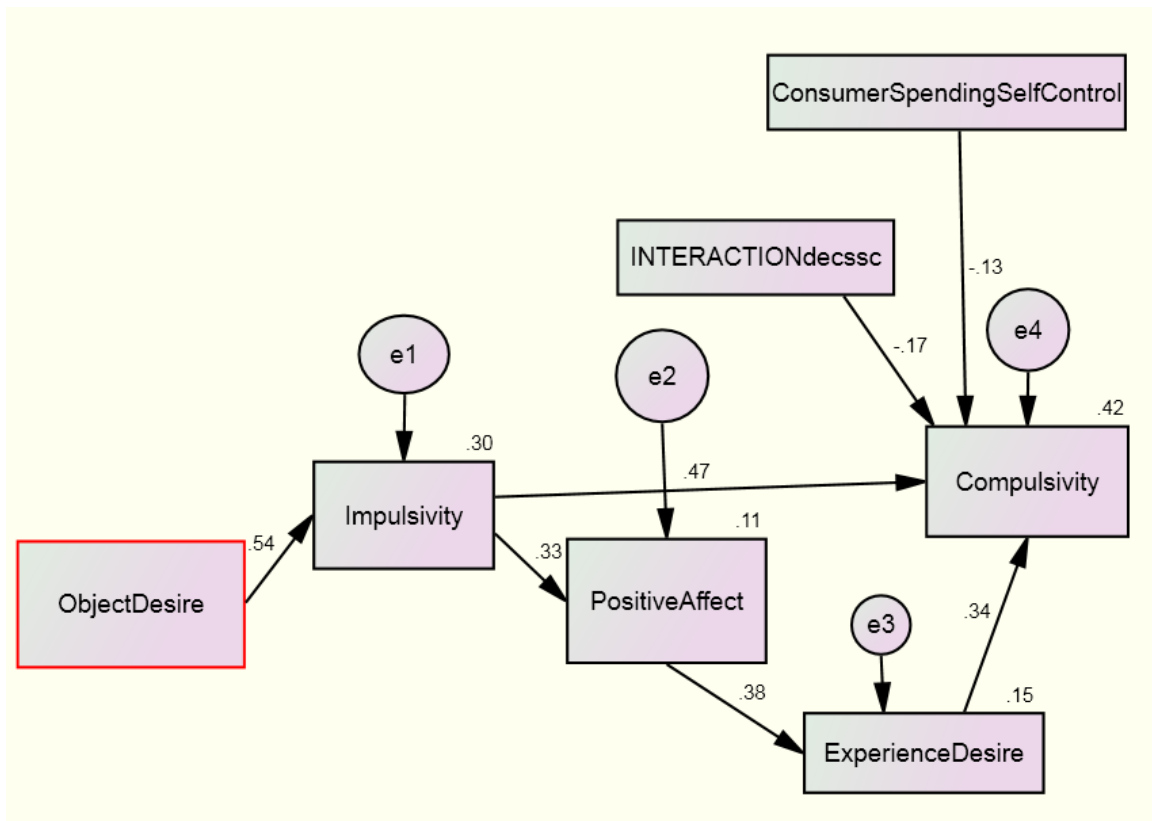
said relationship into the model, finding better fit than the originally hypothesized model ( $\chi^2 = 225.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2 / DF = 45.13$ ; CFI = .76; RMSEA = .28).

**Figure 4.6**  
**Test of Adjusted Model**



Next, we seek to understand the role of self-control within the development process. As self-control is conceptualized in hypothesis 4 as a moderating variable between experience-focused desire and compulsivity, we included consumer spending self-control and the interaction variable into the model (see Figure 4.7). Despite finding a significant pathway between both consumer spending self-control and the interaction term, we fail to find support for Hypothesis 4, as the moderation generates an exceptionally poor model fit from the full model ( $\chi^2 = 2628.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2 / DF = 187.76$ ; CFI = .22; RMSEA = .57).

**Figure 4.7**  
**Addition of Consumer Spending Self-Control into Model**



The final component at play within the developmental model is the hypothesized moderating variable ‘life events,’ which is predicted to exacerbate the effects of desire within the development process. The experience of ‘life events’ was adapted from a scale by Gray et al. (2004) in which the participants were asked to select all events that have occurred to them in the last two years. As the Life Course Model theorizes that significant and stressful life events are likely to be an antecedent to compulsive behaviors (Moschis 2007), we find that compulsive ( $M = 3.17$ ) consumers have experienced a

greater number of stressful events than non-compulsive consumers ( $M = 2.44$ ) ( $t(542) = -9.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (see Table 4.16).

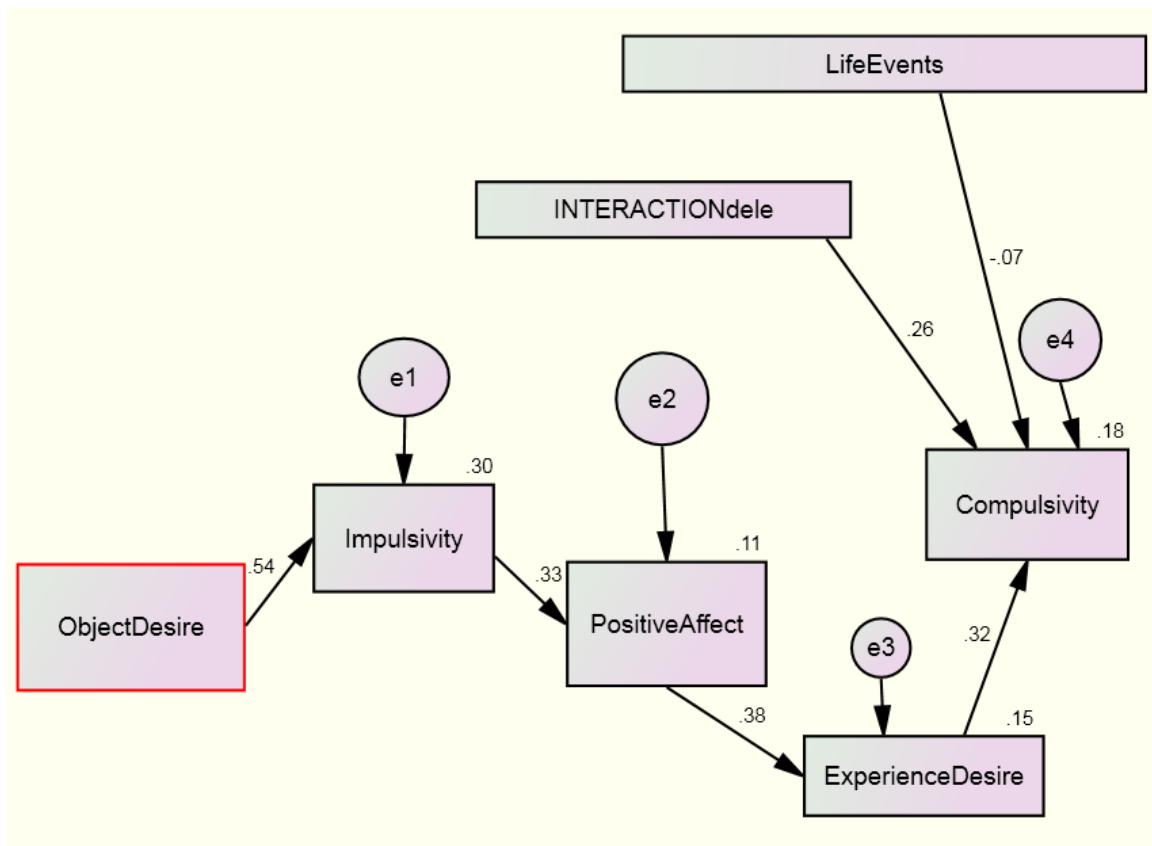
**Table 4.16**  
**Life Events and Percentages by Group**

<b>Life Event</b>	<b>Percentage (%) of Compulsive Consumers Experiencing Event (n = 42)</b>	<b>Percentage (%) of Non- compulsive Consumers Experiencing Event (n = 543)</b>
Death of Spouse or Child	0.0	1.1
Divorce	7.1	3.5
Marital Separation	7.1	3.5
Death of a Close Family Member	38.1	31.4
Gaining a New Family Member	35.7	24.6
Major Business Readjustment	21.4	14.5
Major Personal Injury or Illness	23.8	16.5
Being Fired from Work	19.0	11.9
Pregnancy of Spouse/Partner	11.9	4.6
Retirement	0.0	1.5
Death of a Close Friend	9.5	13.2
Major Change in Number of Arguments with a Significant Other	31.0	16.9
Foreclosure on a Mortgage or Loan	7.1	2.4
Major Change in Responsibility at Work	19.0	17.2
Changing to a New School	16.7	13.9
Change in Residence	40.5	43.9
Major Change in Usual Type and/or Amount of Recreation	28.6	23.3
Mean	3.17	2.44
Standard Deviation	2.02	1.76

Fundamentally, a simple correlation supports a relationship between life events and compulsivity ( $r = .14$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with 1 additional negative life event likely to predict a .07 increase in compulsivity ( $p < .05$ ). Although we do find a predictive relationship

between life events and compulsivity, we seek to test the hypothesized role that negative life events moderate the influence of consumer shopping desire on compulsivity. Similar to the results found with self-control, we fail to find a significant moderating effect of negative life events within the development of compulsivity and very poor model fit ( $\chi^2 = 1350.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2 / DF = 96.44$ ; CFI = .35; RMSEA = .40) (see Figure 4.8). Thus, we fail to find support for hypothesis 5.

**Figure 4.8**  
**Addition of Life Events into Model**



The results displayed among this variable illustrate that, although negative life events contribute to the likelihood of compulsive behaviors, they *do not* intensify the effects of desire within the development of compulsivity. In fact, the addition of the life events variables causes the pathway between experience-focused desire and compulsivity

to become non-significant. While it was conceptualized that individuals experiencing a negative life event would feel increases in desire for the shopping experience, we find that negative life events exist as a separate driver of compulsivity. We still acknowledge negative life events as a trigger for a compulsive episode; however, we fail to find a connected relationship between said variable and the process conceptualized within this dissertation.

Unfortunately, the addition of the pathway between impulsivity and compulsivity, as well as the two moderating variables, fail to attain strong model fit as dictated by structural equation modeling methodology. While we present herein a theoretically strong argument for the introduction of said developmental model, our statistical data fails to support our conceptual argument. Such results are confusing, as the pathways, when observed individually, exhibit significant relationships when utilizing both regression and ANOVA analyses. A possible explanation may be due to the process nature of our model, which may not be captured or explained by SEM. This is further reason for the necessity of a mixed method design, as qualitative inquiry will enable us to observe more accurately the intricacies of longitudinal consumer behavior development.



## **CHAPTER 5: STUDY 2 - QUALITATIVE DESIGN**

Study 2 is the qualitative component of this mixed method design and is used to further enhance our understanding of compulsive consumption and related developmental patterns. There are two primary goals for this qualitative study. First, we will use in-depth interviews to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the development of compulsive consumption. As the proposed model is ideally suited for a longitudinal methodological design, it is beneficial to supplement our quantitative findings with discussions on past shopping behaviors as well as changes in shopping behaviors and attitudes over time. Secondly, we seek to address measurement differences between the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) and Ridgway et al. (2008) scales as it was recognized during interviewing that the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale might provide greater leniency in compulsive consumption identification. A qualitative analysis between individuals scoring compulsive on either or both scales will thus provide for a better thematic understanding of the factors at play for each method of measurement.

Although qualitative designs do not typically entail quantitative inquiry, it is necessary within this study to first measure an individual's level of compulsivity to understand the collected interview data more accurately. As such, potential participants were asked to complete a preliminary survey to measure their level of compulsivity using both Faber and O'Guinn (1992) and Ridgway et al. (2008) measurement scales. Participants were invited to partake in an interview if they scored as a compulsive consumer on either one or both of the compulsivity measures; such individuals were informed that the interview would last approximately 30-45 minutes and they would be

compensated with a \$10 gift card for their time. See Table 5.1 for interview questions and Table 5.2 for interview participants.

**Table 5.1**  
**Interview Questions used in Study 2**

1. Tell me your general feelings towards shopping.

Probe: What makes you feel this way while you are shopping?

Probe: Top 5 stores?

2. Do you shop during certain mood states?

- Anger? If so, why? What makes you feel better?
- Sadness? If so, why? What makes you feel better?
- Stress? If so, why? What makes you feel better?
- Happiness? If so, why? What makes you feel better?
- Boredom? If so, why? What makes you feel better?

3. Explain to me, if applicable, how your shopping behavior has changed over time.

Probe: When can you remember the first time enjoying shopping? What were those shopping trips like?

Probe: How has your impulse buying changed over time? Has it increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Probe: How do you feel after your shopping trip? What about several days later?

4. Would you say you struggle with self-control while shopping? Are there certain moments that cause you to have more or less self-control? Certain items?

Probe: Has your self-control changed over time? Has it increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

5. Do you ever feel a sense of guilt or regret after a shopping trip? If so, what makes you feel that way?

6. Say you get an email from a retail store highlighting a sale. What is the likelihood of you going to the website? Going to the store?

7. Say you are at the mall and you see a sale sign in front of a store. How likely are you to go into the store?

8. Say you are in a store and there is a sale table. How likely are you to immediately go to that table?

9. Do you use credit cards? How many do you have? What do you use it/them for?

10. I'm going to give you different moments in a shopping experience and I want you to rate them 1-10 (10 being the best) on your level of excitement. If your excitement level decreases at any point, please explain why.

- Shopping trip is in 2 days:
- When you wake up the morning of the shopping trip:
- Driving to the mall:
- When you walk into the mall:
- When you walk into a store and you find an item you love:
- When you buy that item:
- Driving home from the mall:
- A few hours after your trip:

11: Is there anything else regarding your shopping behaviors that you would like to share or you may find relevant?

**Table 5.2**  
**In-Depth Interview Participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Compulsion Score (Ridgway et al. 2008)</b>	<b>Compulsion Score (Faber and O'Guinn 1992)</b>
Brittany	F	34	1.61
Hillary	F	26	.61
Erin	F	35	-0.04
Catherine	F	25	0
Christine	F	25	0.16
Katie	F	27	1.18
Camile	F	26	-0.08
Mary	F	29	3.28
Emily	F	27	1.31
Kelly	F	28	2.28
Samantha	F	25	2.27
Kelsey	F	34	1.26
Melissa	F	42	-3.05
Kathy	F	30	1.06
Lisa	F	39	-3.54
Carly	F	28	1.11
Danielle	F	26	0.48
Mindy	F	30	-0.14
Steph	F	32	-1.98
Marie	F	33	0.1

Lauren	F	33	-0.4
Ashley	F	29	-1.45
Michael	M	32	-0.46
Allison	F	28	-1.43
Amber	F	27	2.62
Elisa	F	30	-1.39
Julie	F	31	0.23
Alicia	F	43	-1.57

### **Differences in Compulsivity Measurement**

The first major concern to be addressed through the qualitative inquiry is to parcel out both the differences and similarities between the two scales of compulsivity measurement within the extant marketing literature. As has already been discussed, Faber and O’Guinn (1992) published the first mainstream scale to measure Compulsive Buying two decades ago; this is the most frequently used scale in the literature on compulsive consumers. Recently, however, Ridgway et al. (2008) published what they purport to be a more accurate measure of compulsivity. Because of the great lapse in time between the two scale publications, it was a secondary interest of this dissertation to evaluate the participant bases that each scale respectively generated and to evaluate the proposed model using both measurement scales.

As interviews progressed, we began to notice that those individuals only scoring ‘compulsive’ on the scale developed by Ridgway et al. (2008) did not maintain the characteristics identified in the literature on compulsivity. Instead, we see that many compulsive individuals identified by the Compulsive Buying Tendencies scale (Ridgway et al. 2008) maintain one or both of the following characteristics: (1) a seeker of good deals and/or (2) gross availability of monetary resources.

## Bargain Hunter

“I can’t tell you the last time I didn’t buy something on sale.”  
(Christine, Ridgway et al. 2008)

One of the overwhelmingly common themes among individuals scoring as compulsive according to Ridgway et al. (2008), yet not compulsive according to Faber and O’Guinn (1992), is the participant’s infatuation with thrifty shopping habits. Characteristically, these individuals frequent stores such as TJ Maxx and Target approximately three to four times a week, yet proudly proclaim that they would never spend more than \$30 per trip (on average). Further, many individuals scoffed at their peers for spending large amounts of money on items that could be found cheaper elsewhere.

I would never pay more than \$50.00 for a pair of jeans. And a lot of girls my age pay \$100.00 or more for jeans. I probably wouldn’t even pay \$50.00 like that’s actually really stretching it like that’s the top of my thing. On shirts [...] those have got to be like less than \$15.00 like I’m not going to buy a t-shirt for \$20.00. That’s ridiculous. (Mary, Ridgway et al. 2008)

Such behavior is often a source of competition for these individuals, as the sense of thrill and excitement from the shopping experience becomes contingent on their ability to find a good deal and maximize savings. We see many times that such deals become a bragging right to their peers - a way to show success within the marketplace. One participant, Mindy, told a story about a \$118.00 Jessica Simpson purse that she bought for \$8.00 at Dillard’s. As Mindy (Ridgway et al. 2008) exclaimed, “I was talking about it for months!” Mindy later went on to discuss that she really didn’t *need* the Jessica Simpson purse, but she bought it because the cost was so low. This observation mirrors the findings of Lynch (2009) who explored cross-cultural “winning” behaviors within the

retail environment, illustrating that U.S. Americans found success in monetary savings, while Europeans considered perfect product attainment evidence of a win.

In this vein, we found that the low cost of the item is really the point of decision for this group of consumers, not sales promotion as a marketing tactic.

I think it's just the low price. I mean I like knowing that it's a low price.  
For a purse, it has to be below \$25. (Kelly, Ridgway et al. 2008)

Many individuals place limitations on the amounts they are willing to spend on certain items and disregard even spectacular promotional deals. We see this exemplified in the example below as Mary remarks about her boyfriend,

If [an item] was \$100.00 and it's on sale for \$50.00, but there's this other item that was like \$13.00. I would jump for the \$13.00 instead of the \$50.00. I notice that a lot like my boyfriend always says 'It was great deal I got it for \$60.00 and it was originally \$140.00.' That's not a good deal to me. It was still \$60.00. (Mary, Ridgway et al. 2008)

Mary's price conscious nature is displayed here and further illustrates that it is not the want or need for items, but rather the desire for the sense of accomplishment in finding a good deal.

This feeling is mostly driven by the number of items one is able to buy for the least amount of money. Many individuals in this group spoke about the multiple items they were able to buy for extremely low prices. It is important to note here the difference between buying multiple items for a low price and buying multiple items as a result of a sales promotion. For this group of consumers, retail sales are driven by the extremely low prices, and thus multiple items are purchased. The following two quotes illustrate this point:

Dillard's always has a shoe sale every year and it's awesome and I think I bought three pairs because they were like twenty bucks. (Emily, Ridgway et al. 2008)

Well [garage sales were] awesome because I usually only spent like \$2.00 or like you know \$5.00 and you got three pairs of shoes. (Mary, Ridgway et al. 2008)

As expressed by Mary above, she spoke openly that her love for sales really stems from her ability to get more items. We saw many individuals in this category boast about the multitude of items that they are able to find and how low of a price for which they were able to purchase them.

We see a fundamental difference here between the two measures of compulsivity. For these consumers, purchases are predicated on low price and thus multiple items are purchased because of the low overall cost of the shopping trip. Compulsive consumers as per Faber and O'Guinn (1992), while they similarly purchase multiple items, are susceptible to sales promotions and marketing cues, rather than being driven by the low cost of the item. We see the difference here in that the consumers discussed within this group have distinct price cut-offs for what they deem to be an acceptable price for an item. The alternative group of consumers, however, justifies significant expenditures by sales promotion. Promotions such as "Buy one, Get one 50% off" or "Buy 2 for \$40" allows compulsive consumers to justify their desire for purchasing multiple expensive items, as such:

The price differential justifies getting more, for me, rather than just getting one thing. (Melissa, both Compulsivity scales)

Such sales tactics would not attract the "Bargain Hunters" described within this section, as the final price after promotion would still be more money than they are willing to spend.

## Money to Spend

The second predominant theme uncovered while speaking with many of the participants is that these consumers simply have the monetary resources to shop frequently. Although all of the participants interviewed are classified as compulsive according to either one or both measurement scales, it became apparent through the interview process that many of these individuals did not match the characteristics classic of compulsive consumers. While they indeed had significant presence in the marketplace, and hefty purchase receipts to match, this group of individuals had no debt, shame, or inability to control spending – all telling characteristics of compulsivity present in the literature.

It became clear that the individuals deemed compulsive using the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale lacked many of the essential elements of compulsive buying, while participants who scored compulsive on both scales matched the characteristics described within scholarship on compulsivity. To this end, those not scoring as compulsive on the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) scale talked very openly about their shopping habits and love of the shopping environment. For them, shopping brings a sense of pride, not a sense of shame.

There were two primary reasons for shopping described within the group: (1) a fun activity to do when bored and (2) a means to buy new items to impress others. During the interview process, the participants were asked to reflect on shopping during different mood states. As compulsive consumers are characterized to shop during negative mood states (Faber and Christenson 1996), we were surprised that many



participants disagreed with this notion, explaining that shopping when they are upset or stressed makes the shopping experience *less* pleasurable. Instead, many of the participants pinpointed their shopping trips around times of boredom.

But if I'm bored, I go shopping a lot when I'm bored. That's probably my biggest problem that I don't have anything to do. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, if I'm bored I'll go shop. (Hillary, Ridgway et al. 2008).

I think maybe being bored in Lincoln. I've done that,... there's been times where I'm like I have nothing to do, what can I do and then I'll go to Target for you know paper towels or you know something small and then I'll get like four shirts. (Erin, Ridgway et al. 2008)

The second driver of shopping behaviors for this group of consumers is the need to impress others around them. The majority of participants commented that the pleasure they derive from the shopping experience is actually drawn from the expectancy that the new purchases will either impress their peers or make them feel superior to those around them. To them, new clothing and new styles equates to higher approval from peers and self-assurance. These concepts are illustrated by the three women below,

I'd say probably that one like I don't know it always feels good to wear a new outfit. You know, I don't know if you know that feeling but just having something new that's not been used before like I don't know I just feel like it feels better. (Catherine, Ridgway et al. 2008)

I'm the only one in that small town that got out. So always like going home you're like oh-my-gosh look at her she looks really good and is doing well. (Christine, Ridgway et al. 2008)

I don't know it just kind of gives me like a little bit of an adrenaline rush being able to purchase something that I feel I look good in, or if I get compliments on something in the store I'll be more likely to purchase something. So I guess it's just like confidence like feeling good wearing the new trends. (Danielle, Ridgway et al. 2008)

We also see participants using their presence in the marketplace to "win" in knowledge contests against their friends. This notion is expressed by one's expertise of

products in the marketplace. We see this exemplified most tellingly within the electronics domain, as participants boasted that they knew more than their friends and strived to be the opinion leader in their peer group.

I will love to survey the electronics stuff: Amazon, eBay [...] you know every day there's like electronics discounts [...] every day I open eBay to the electronics stuff ... Yeah I think in 2008 I bought the Apple iTouch when my friends introduced me,... I used my saving money to get the Apple iTouch. (Michael, Ridgway et al. 2008)

Such aspiration of knowledge leads these participants to be actively engaged in the marketplace on a daily basis. Although such behaviors are predominantly online, participants described their behaviors as continually browsing websites such as amazon.com and ebay.com - as well as blogs and forums - to stay up-to-date on trends and changing attitudes.

The key point of difference between these consumers and compulsive consumers as identified by Faber and O'Guinn (1992) is the issue of debt and control. While these are two key elements of compulsivity, many of the participants in this study boasted about their lack of debt and ability to refrain from shopping when they didn't have the monetary funds available.

I think I am very in control just because like I psych myself out about all my purchases. I'll pick something up and I'll probably go through like the entire store with it and then at the last minute I'll ditch it. (Mary, Ridgway et al. 2008)

This quote by Mary exemplifies this notion as she is very calculating in her purchase decisions and has described her love of shopping to be based on the shopping experience itself and not the need to spend money.

We saw very similar sentiments among other participants who saw no issue in curtailing their shopping behaviors for brief periods of time. Many participants spoke of times waiting for a paycheck or the need to pay rent or other bills from which they had to put their shopping trips on hold.

I mean I never have a money problem as far as like if I need to buy something if I absolutely have something due like rent or you know books or something then I will like I'll have enough money for it. (Camile, Ridgway et al. 2008)

I have a job because I pay for all of my bills and so I have to pay for like rent and all of that, gas, and so that's why I have the job and then with the excess I can choose to shop with it. (Katie, Ridgway et al. 2008)

While the extant literature describes compulsive individuals as those who shop despite having other responsibilities or spend money allotted for other purposes (e.g., bill payment; Scherhorn 1990), the compulsive consumers within this group of individuals had a very realistic understanding of when it is or is not an appropriate time to go shopping.

#### Clinical Compulsivity

Even if I don't buy anything, I'll just sit and shop for hours.  
(Melissa, both Compulsivity scales)

In contrast to the aforementioned sections, we find that individuals deemed compulsive according to the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) Compulsive Buying Scale maintain the primary qualities that are characteristic of compulsive consumption behaviors. Unlike the compulsive individuals according to Ridgway et al. (2008), these classically compulsive consumers seek pleasure in the pure shopping experience, while subsequently suffering from guilt and agitation as a result of their behaviors.

Um probably actually the experience like unless I find something really, really good then that probably makes my day but otherwise yeah even if I don't buy something just like going and looking for stuff like I find enjoyable. (Steph, both Compulsivity scales)

...when I'm hanging it up next to something that still has the tag on it. I'm like, ugh I didn't even like that and I just went and bought more things. It's the excess. Like I don't need that many things. But in my head I'm like, oh I do, I do. And then it becomes the reality when I'm hanging it up next to the ones that are already hanging in there. (Lisa, both Compulsivity scales)

These two quotes illustrate the emotional disturbance that these participants feel because of their shopping behaviors. Unlike the discussions of bargain hunting and shopping as a skilled hobby, the individuals in this group have a *need* to go shopping that must be satiated. Further, and most importantly, these individuals aren't shopping for items, but rather for the experience. This was stated clearly by Steph, but also illustrated in the quote by Lisa. The fact that Lisa has an excess of clothing with the tags still intact demonstrates that her shopping is not for items that are needed or will be used; rather, they are simply the result of an escape into the shopping environment.

Further, we find evidence of a significant lack of control in spending behaviors. The compulsive individuals unanimously spoke of their inability to both stop themselves from shopping and control spending beyond their means.

Sometimes I wish I didn't feel like I constantly needed something, like oh I need that, I need that. But then again, that's how I am. (Lisa, both Compulsivity scales)

Debt is a significant problem for these women, as they spoke of their excessive use of credit and family members often having to bail them out. In the quote below, Melissa speaks about her use of her parent's credit card; a credit card which she has been forbidden to use.

I try to only use it one time, and then it happens again, and its usually worth a significant amount of money like, if I'm going to use it, I'm going to get a significant amount and suffer the consequences later, if I use it once then I kind of use that as an excuse to do it more times. Like okay, it's going to be on this month's bill, so I might as well use it anyway and keep going. I'd say it's pretty addictive. I have their credit card numbers memorized. (Melissa, both Compulsivity scales)

Incidences such as that described by Melissa exemplify compulsive buying behavior. Truly compulsive individuals maintain a driving need for the shopping experience that must be satiated before other duties and responsibilities (e.g., studying for a test) can be tended to. This driving force causes inevitable debt and resulting guilt and personal disappointment by the individual at hand. As can be seen in the striking difference in behaviors between those identified as compulsive by Faber and O'Guinn (1992) and Ridgway et al. (2008), the behaviors of the latter group fail to align appropriately with existing literature on compulsive buying behaviors.

It is for this reason that we suggest herein that the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) Compulsive Buying Scale be used exclusively within the marketing literature for proper measurement. Utilization of the scale by Ridgway et al. (2008) will likely lead to an over-represented group of individuals who lack the true behavioral essence of compulsivity within the marketplace. While these individuals indeed have a significant presence in the marketplace and high shopping knowledge, they lack the detrimental aspect of harm that is a fundamental characteristic of compulsivity. Mislabeling individuals as compulsive when they fail to exhibit the (in)appropriate behaviors within the marketplace is likely to generate misinterpreted and misleading information about such a dangerous stream of behaviors. While such analysis is not the primary purpose of this dissertation, the interviews conducted herein illustrate a striking difference in measurement capabilities

that we felt must be addressed. With this knowledge in hand, we were able to progress further in analysis and model development with the most appropriate participant base.

### **Compulsive Consumption Development Model**

The second purpose of this qualitative study is to assess the accuracy of the Compulsive Consumption Development Model. While the proposed model would ideally be tested over a twenty-year span per each individual, we find a mixed model approach to be the next best appropriate method of testing our hypotheses. As such, our interview participants were asked to reflect on their past and the development of their shopping behaviors. With each individual, the participant and the researcher spoke of first shopping moments, family behaviors, and changes in shopping behaviors, interests, and attitudes over time. From this, we are able to understand the developmental process of compulsive consumption in a more holistic manner to supplement the quantitative findings presented in Study 1.

The discussions centering on the development of shopping behaviors told a very similar story. Most of the participants spoke of points in time at a young age when they could remember first enjoying the shopping experience. Many of these experiences were focused on bonding with family members (primarily with one's mother and sister(s)) during which the child would receive special items or be allowed to spend savings on yearned for treats.

I think I've always liked it. My mom and I have shopped always or we would go with my grandmom from the beginning of time, so I'm just used to it. (Carly, Ridgway et al. 2008)

It was probably in middle school when my mom and I would go shopping just because we would make a day out of it and it was kind of like me and

my sister and my mom and we'd always like you know go to lunch and go to the mall. (Emily, Ridgway et al. 2008)

Yeah my mom was like a stay-at-home mom so we'd always like go out to lunch and then go shopping. (Probe) It's was kind of our bonding time I guess like hang out go shopping that was what we did together. (Lauren, Ridgway et al. 2008)

While some participants did mention bonding with their mother over lunch outings, the predominance of these narratives were centered on shopping and receiving items. Although many individuals acknowledged the less than favorable implications of their behaviors (i.e., feeling spoiled), they admitted that much of their enjoyment from shopping at a young age came from their ability to receive items off their parent's dime.

I liked going with my parents more because they'll pay for my stuff and then I don't have to. (Samantha, Ridgway et al. 2008)

Although some participants were embarrassed to admit they would enjoy shopping with their mother to receive expensive items – one woman even shamefully called her younger self selfish – we see a strong parallel here to the beginning of the Compulsive Consumption Development Model. At such a young age, these individuals were focused more on the items that they would walk away with than the overall experience of the shopping environment. Although the shopping trip would begin as a bonding excursion with family, the focus of pleasure remained on the items one would end up with after all was said and done. Although some individuals would have a product in mind from the onset, most of the participants spoke of simply finding items on the fly and purchasing them. As such, we see a high prevalence of reflection on impulsivity within the marketplace.

My mother likes to purchase clothes for me because I enjoy and appreciate fashion so much. We used to go on shopping sprees, spending hundreds of dollars each time at several stores. (Marie, Ridgway et al. 2008)

As the interview questions progressed, we began to speak of changes in shopping behaviors as the participants grew and matured. We saw many statements regarding increased shopping behaviors through middle school and high school as young women would begin to compare themselves to their friends and develop their individuality. Although this is to be expected (Bachmann, John, and Rao 1993), we heard many striking comments from the women deemed compulsive according to the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) scale. Such women spoke of significant changes in the goals of their shopping behaviors away from bonding and fun to that of escape and necessity.

Similar to the differences seen between the two measures of compulsivity, we find that those truly compulsive individuals learned to use shopping as a means to escape and a way to get into their "own little world" (Lisa, both Compulsivity scales).

I think it's more though, for the actual experience out of it. And that it like, to some extent it relaxes me for the time, and I'm happy for the time. Then I'm overwhelmed and I have too much stuff, then I get mad that I spent too much money. (Melissa, both Compulsivity scales)

I started looking at places to go for like shopping addiction because I would, it was to the point where I would like every other day I would probably go buy something that I didn't even need but it was a time of my life where I feel like I was down a lot and so since it does make me feel better that's what I wanted to go do. (Steph, both Compulsivity scales)

Two very strong elements of compulsivity come out from Melissa's and Steph's comments. First, we see the use of shopping as a way to become happy from an implied previous negative emotional state. Secondly, however, we also see the nearly immediate decline into regret that comes from excessive shopping (DeSarbo and Edwards 1996). The quotes above are characteristic of truly compulsive individuals, as the shopping experience is not about the product at all, rather it has transformed into a means of mood adjustment. Sadly, such positive mood states fail to last long term, as the consumer is



snapped back to reality and is faced with the consequences of their learned coping behavior.

We see through these interviews the development of compulsivity over time. As these young women began their foray into the shopping environment with family and the enjoyment of getting new items, they found a gradual change in motivations (i.e., learning to use shopping as an escape) away from a focus on the item to a need for the environment and experience in itself.

I think it started originally as for the products but then it quickly, almost immediately, then I just enjoyed it. (Melissa, both Compulsivity scales)

Significantly, the progression into compulsivity is marked by a distinct and stressful life event experienced by the individual. As is noted in the theoretical addendum in Chapter 2, such life events emerged in the interviews as a trigger point in transition to compulsivity. It is through these stressful moments in time that the individual learned of using the marketplace as an escape route from negativity and utilized shopping as a coping mechanism.

We found that two main life events were spoken of most frequently within the interviews: (1) a break up with a significant other and (2) moving to a new town. While many other life events are likely to trigger similar movements into compulsivity, these two themes are often the most stressful experiences for the age group under discovery.

In high school when it started my senior year, it was because of a kid I was dating then, it was not very good and so when that stuff would happen, I remember, the first thing that would happen when I found out stuff that he had done I would go shopping immediately because I didn't have to deal with it, or think about it. I was distracted by other things, looking. (Melissa, both Compulsivity scales)

Probably like the first year I lived down here I had a bad like a major problem and I really started getting concerned for myself because I had no money in my bank account ever. (Steph, both Compulsivity scales)

Although we did not directly ask the participants about significant or stressful life events, all compulsive consumers as categorized on the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) scale spoke of stressful instances in their lives through which their shopping behaviors became more intense and predominantly experiential in nature. Shopping became the go-to coping mechanism when negative feeling states arose. Notably, the conversion into compulsivity for these young women occurred at a significant moment in their lives; these individuals had never experienced such emotional instability and thus were drawn to situations through which they remembered feeling good. As shopping is most often a fundamental part of adolescence, it is not surprising that these women so easily returned to the shopping environment for pleasure. Here we see support for Elaborated Intrusion Theory, as the participants reflected back on past positive experiences and relied on the expectation of increased positive mood states during moments of strife and turmoil.

What is most striking within these interviews is the difference in motivation between the two sets of compulsive individuals as dictated by the sources of measurement. Using the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) scale, we see sentiments similar to that expressed by Melissa; shopping became an exercise of escape and simple enjoyment rather than focused on the items that were to be purchased. Individuals deemed compulsive according to only the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale failed to express such development of desire for the experience itself; rather, as expressed in the sections on bargain hunting and available monetary resources, they maintained a focus on the items that could and would be purchased.

Accordingly, the developmental model was only qualitatively supported among individuals deemed compulsive according to the scale developed by Faber and O'Guinn (1992). Through the discussions on scale differences, we refrain from labeling this as a study limitation and rather reflect on the apparent differences that emerge between the two groups. As we do not believe that Ridgway et al. (2008) accurately taps into a genuine compulsive consumer base, we only used the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) scale for Study 1. By limiting the variation we experienced in Study 2, we expect both cleaner and more reliable results from testing the proposed developmental model.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

It is quite clear that both impulsive and compulsive behaviors induce deviant forms of consumption. Impulsive consumption behaviors generate spontaneous and irresistible urges to purchase, while compulsive consumption takes this a step further through repetition and the inability to maintain control. This paper postulates that impulsive and compulsive consumption may, in fact, be related constructs through which a consumer transitions from one phenomenon to another. Primarily driven by desire within the shopping environment, a consumer's transition may begin with an initial impulse purchase. The consumer then learns of the pleasures associated with shopping behaviors and, through mental elaboration, begins to use shopping as a tool to cope with and/or escape the troubles of reality. As the consumer crosses over the threshold of transition to become a clearly defined compulsive consumer, the shopping motive has changed. In the proposed model herein, we find that, in some cases of compulsive consumption development, pleasure is no longer derived solely from the consumption object; rather, pleasure begins to be sought from the shopping experience itself.

This dissertation addresses three important gaps in the marketing literature: (1) the development of compulsivity from impulsive behaviors, (2) quantification of consumer shopping desire, and (3) measurement inconsistencies among current compulsivity scales within extant scholarship. Through a mixed methods analysis, we have been able to parcel out some intricate details that we believe contribute to the growing understanding of compulsivity. By combining quantitative survey results with in-depth interviews, we have developed a comprehensive understanding of factors at play

within compulsivity development, as well as a more accurate account of measurement within this domain.

### **Development of Compulsive Consumption**

While extant literature of compulsive consumption and addictive behaviors cites a plethora of antecedents and causes of said deviant behaviors (Faber and O'Guinn 2008), we sought to understand the role that impulsivity plays within compulsivity. Existing scholarship acknowledges impulsive tendencies within compulsive consumers (O'Guinn and Faber 1989), yet marketing scholarship fails to put forth the possibility that impulsive behavior in the marketplace may be a catalyst for compulsivity development. The quantitative surveys and in-depth interviews performed in this paper set out to investigate this behavioral process to gain a more complete glimpse into the development of the deviant behavior at hand.

Our results illustrate a key player within the developmental process: the role of desire within the retail encounter. Through a beginning review, the authors found key insights from the literature on consumer desire (see Belk et al. 2003), yet found no available measurement for the construct. The iterative, multi-sample process conducted herein developed the Consumer Shopping Desire scale consisting of two dominant factors addressing instances of both passion and need within the marketplace.

With the Consumer Shopping Desire scale identified and verified, we are left with a scale that allows the marketing community to measure a consumer's level of passion and intense interest focused on both consumption objects and consumption experiences. It is our goal to provide marketing scholarship with an ability to identify individuals who

may feel a deeper connection to, or reliability on, the marketplace. As discussed by Chen (2009), desire is an intense feeling that stimulates consumption choices and is most frequently coupled with notions of escaping from one's current state of mind. As such conceptualization is verified by both the qualitative and quantitative assessment presented herein, we find further theoretical proof of the driving nature that desire has behaviors within the marketplace (both object- and experience-focused).

We believe this deeper understanding of desire to provide marketing scholars with a more nuanced understanding of the different types of desire that may manifest within a shopping episode. While the forces of object-focused desire may lead only to harmless impulse purchases for some, such driving forces may lead to perpetual and increasingly detrimental buying practices for other. Through accurate identification of desire within the marketplace, it is plausible for social marketers to identify at-risk consumers who likely view the marketplace as a vehicle for escape. Just as sociological scholars utilize interventional methods in preventing drug use (Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller 1992), we are equipped with the ability to identify potentially harmful cognitive processes within the shoppingscape. Armed with a deeper understanding of desire, social marketers will be more accurately able to distinguish between impulsive motives and psychological consumer responses. As described by interview participants deemed compulsive according to Faber and O'Guinn (1992), impulsive purchases are frequently regretted purchases, left with the tags in place. Such behavior is in stark contrast to non-compulsive individuals who, while still unplanned, utilize their impulsive purchases.

Future research in this area should tap into changes of desire levels over time. As this dissertation was unable to take a longitudinal approach to data collection, a more

expansive study over time would likely provide deeper insights into the true progression of consumption desires. Tracking an individual as they develop shopping behaviors and interest over time would allow researchers to understand the complex and dynamic nature of consumer shopping desires. Further, such detailed data would provide added insight into the nuanced differences between object- and experience-focused desires. As the two factors remained correlated at a level higher than ideal ( $r = .53$ ), such longitudinal research design would allow for better development of a more sensitive measure of desire.

Although scale development procedures presented within this dissertation were performed according to standard and achieved acceptable results, it is necessary in light of the context to aim for more sensitive measures as previously mentioned. As the nature of compulsive consumption closely aligns with detrimental character and behavior disorders related to addiction, understanding the drivers (i.e., cravings) within the development process will provide addiction researchers with clues into the market's role and damaging contribution for behavioral compulsions. Recognition of not only the presence of object-focused desires, but the intensification of such, would enable researchers to better understand the auxiliary factors at place exacerbating such conditions. As such, identifying key moments within the shopping desire transition will provide for the development of more effective and tailed intervention techniques to help prevent the possible transition into compulsive consumption.

In this vein, our methodological approach uncovered the role of stressful life events in contributing to the development of compulsive behaviors. Although such relationship was not originally conceptualized within the model, or formally addressed

within the interview process, we found significant discussion centered on difficult times within the participant's life. In questioning one's compulsive shopping tendencies, we found that participants cited specific events in their lives as triggers to compulsive shopping episodes. Coupled with the introduction of the Life Course Model, we were able to add to our model in a theoretically meaningful way. As addiction research cites the necessity of a trigger moment (Firma and Gila 1997), so too is needed in a theoretical understanding of compulsive consumption behaviors. While the life events utilized within Study 1 are nearly impossible to prevent or intervene, scholars may use this knowledge to help inform consumers and teach them appropriate coping skills when such events do arise. Developing controlled behaviors within the market during times of stress (e.g., implementing a shopping list) may help alleviate the potential option of complete absence from the marketplace. While such a suggestion is not intended to eliminate all instances of compulsivity, the potential remains for early awareness and the use of more appropriate coping mechanisms by the afflicted individual.

From this discussion, we see an area of future research surrounding the tipping point phenomenon in understanding the moment of transition to compulsive tendencies for consumers in the retail environment. As we conceptualize that the functional nature of the marketplace (i.e., generating pleasure, providing escape) changes through the development process, it is necessary to understand exactly what causes this change to occur – a process internal or external to the marketplace? In this line of research, we would assess if marketer behaviors encourage one's utilization of the retail environment on psychological levels or if the consumer actively engages the marketplace for such purposes. For example, are consumers primed through promotional efforts citing "retail



therapy” to believe that shopping will indeed bring them pleasure during times of pain?

Even further, many apparel firms highlight their “addictive shoe sales,” which may, unknowingly, be used by consumers as a rationale for excessive purchasing. Implications would provide insight into marketing’s role in the addiction process, which would help lead to both tailored intervention methods, as well as advertising best practices that may most appropriately curtail addictive behaviors. Potential future research ideas could utilize an experimental methodology in exploring the effects of such promotional techniques. Research questions highlighting the encouraging nature of said promotions to induce feelings related to personal identity within the retail environment may provide insight into increased shopping behaviors. Do individuals who identify themselves as expert or well-versed shoppers respond more favorably to promotional advertisements purporting such retail behaviors? Does this encourage a self-fulfilling prophecy that leads to increased purchases?

If answers arise accordingly within the experimental context, it is likely to conclude that such promotional techniques contribute to the development and perpetuation of compulsive shopping behaviors. As already mentioned, such marketing techniques may lead an at-risk consumer to justify their purchases using the rationale provided on the copy. As identity research indicates (Childers and Rao 1992), group belonging and associative relationships increase behaviors consistent with group thought. Such behaviors are consistent with the in-depth interviews conducted in Study 2 through which some participants recognized themselves as the “style expert” of their sorority. These women often justified their need to shop to keep up with their identity within the sorority context. Further research into the connection between identity-inferring

promotional techniques and personally-derived consumer shopping identity may provide additional insight into the progression and intensity of compulsive shopping behaviors.

### **Compulsivity Measurement**

The second key contribution to the marketing literature is the assessment of scale measurement in relation to compulsive consumption. A review of the literature on deviant behaviors illustrates a predominant use of the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) scale; however, recent scholarship has emerged citing more appropriate means of compulsivity measurement. While the scale developed by Ridgway et al. (2008) cites a more holistic integration of compulsive attributes, we sought additional tests on the scale's accuracy in identifying compulsive consumers.

Our analysis illustrates qualitatively that the scale developed by Ridgway et al. (2008) paints a more lenient picture in identifying compulsive consumers. While it undoubtedly does identify those who are compulsive, it also mislabels individuals who do not suffer from compulsive tendencies. The number of compulsive individuals identified by Ridgway et al. (2008) in the first data collection of Study 1 was more than double what was identified by Faber and O'Guinn (1992). Finding this disconcerting result, we added such inquiry into our qualitative analysis by interviewing individuals deemed compulsive by either one of the two scales. In line with our suspicions, we observed that many individuals considered compulsive by Ridgway et al. (2008) were excited by the hunt and reward of bargain shopping or had the financial means to purchase frequently. Unlike those individuals within the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) identification, we found

minimal evidence of clinical and/or psychological abnormality or the existence of major life events dictating shopping patterns.

In observing survey items for both scales (see Table 6.1), we find our analysis to be easily explained by the level of intensity dictated by the respective items. As seen in the Faber and O'Guinn (1992) scale, many of the items focus on extreme behaviors and personal psychological responses when unable to shop. Comparatively, we see the items within the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale to be milder in context and applicable to the general population. For example, while some individuals may only pay minimum required credit card payments or have bought items beyond their means (see Faber and O'Guinn 1992), a much larger subsection of the population would likely score themselves highly as being impulsive shoppers or having unopened shopping bags in their closets (see Ridgway et al. 2008). To this point, we find the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale to be general and possibly misleading. For example, does the item regarding unopened shopping bags mean (a) one bag (perhaps a gift for someone) or (b) a lot of bags on a consistent and chronic basis (as the typical classification of a compulsive consumer)? The Ridgway et al. (2008) scale also assumes that an individual who shops frequently (and judged so by peers) is compulsive. As illustrated in Study 2, we find that many individuals shop frequently out of boredom or for hobby, rather than as a coping or avoidance mechanism from negative feeling states.

**Table 6.1**  
**Compulsivity Scales**

Faber and O'Guinn (1992)

1. If I have any money left at the end of the pay period, I just have to spend it.
2. Felt others would be horrified if they knew of my spending habits.
3. Bought things even though I couldn't afford them.
4. Wrote a check when I knew I didn't have enough money in the bank to cover it.
5. Bought myself something in order to make myself better.
6. Felt anxious or nervous on days I didn't go shopping.
7. Made only the minimum payments on my credit card.

Ridgway et al. (2008)

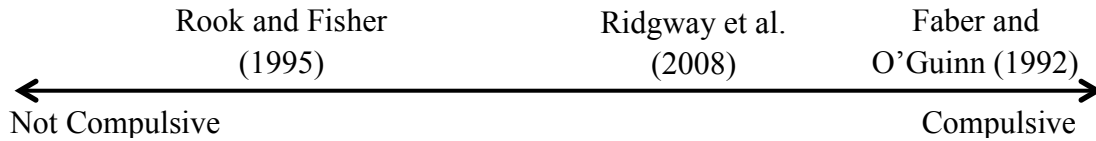
1. My closet has unopened shopping bags in it.
2. Others might consider me a 'shopaholic'.
3. Much of my life centers around buying things.
4. I consider myself an impulse purchaser.
5. I often buy things I don't need.
6. I often buy things I did not plan to buy.

Further, we see that the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale emphasizes impulsive behaviors. While compulsive consumers do exhibit impulsive traits, it is important to maintain clear separation between the two consumption behaviors. Having 1/3 of the items related to impulsivity (#4 and #6), it is likely that one's total compulsivity score is overly influenced by impulsivity characteristics. As described previously, qualitative in-depth interviews illustrated two categories of impulsive behaviors: (1) those that were unplanned but used by the consumer (e.g., candy at the checkout counter) and (2) those that were unused after purchase and regretted by the consumer. While we believe the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale to cover the appropriate areas, we suggest item modification to address the issue of consumer regret. As such, possible modification could include, "I

often regret the things I buy” or “I consider myself having a problem with impulse purchasing.”

With such considerations, it is our suggestion that marketing scholars continue to use the Faber and O’Guinn (1992) scale in identifying psychologically compulsive consumers; the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale is not sufficient for appropriate and precise identification. While we are not suggesting that the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale was developed in error or is statistically faulty, we believe that the scale items are not reflective of true compulsive behaviors. An effective option in utilizing the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale would possibly be as a precursor to compulsivity development. Just as discussed in the above section on the development of compulsivity, it is important to identify individuals who are at risk for extreme shopping behaviors. As seen in Figure 6.1, the Ridgway et al. (2008) scale may possibly be used as a signal for risky behavior. Individuals who are categorized as ‘compulsive’ according to Ridgway et al. (2008) - but not Faber and O’Guinn (1992) – may be individuals most responsive to intervention attempts to prevent further progression into compulsive consumption. Further, these ‘at-risk’ individuals may be in the elaboration, transition stage in the Compulsive Consumption Development Model and thus such identified impulsive purchases (see Table 6.1) may spur moments of enjoyment and mental intrusion.

**Figure 6.1**  
**Continuum of Compulsivity Measurement**



Additional exploration into measurement opportunities would be to explore an adapted version of the DSM-IV substance dependence measurement system. The measurement items employed by the DSM-IV are the number one standard used by the social sciences (i.e., psychology) to identify individuals suffering from substance abuse and dependence. While the psychology domain has been hesitant to accept behavioral compulsions as truly defined addictions, progress has been made in the realm of gambling compulsions. While not yet released, the next edition of the DSM officially recognizes gambling compulsion as a psychological disorder. We believe such recognition to be forward progress in the possible future recognition of behavioral compulsions as addictions. To this end, future measurement comparisons should seek to evaluate adapted DSM-IV assessment procedures, as well (see Table 6.2). Scholarship incorporating such measurement techniques may help to further legitimize behavioral compulsions as addictive behaviors within both marketing and the social sciences. With heightened attention, such destructive disorders would garner greater support within both the academic and practicing communities.

**Table 6.2**  
**DSM-IV Substance Dependence Assessment Adapted to Compulsive Shopping**

	Yes	No
I feel preoccupied with shopping – reliving past shopping experiences or thinking about future shopping trips.		
I need to shop more and more to get the same level of pleasure and excitement.		
I have had repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop shopping.		
I am restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop shopping.		
I shop as a way of escaping from problems.		
It makes me feel better when I return items.		
I find myself lying to others about the extent of my shopping.		
I've committed illegal acts to finance my shopping.		
I have jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of shopping.		
I've relied on others to provide money to relieve a financial situation caused by shopping.		

### Conclusion

Deviant purchasing behaviors have the potential to cause great harm to the consumer. Although impulsive consumption is indeed much less worrisome than compulsive consumption, problems can arise from both. From an economic perspective, uncontrollable urges to spend put the consumer at risk of increased debts when faced with the inability to pay off obtained goods. These debts have the potential to not only harm the consumer in question, but spillover effects may translate as problems to the consumer's family as well. Furthermore, as the impulsive consumer transitions into a compulsive consumer, the behaviors and resulting consequences worsen. Consumers are now completely unable to control their urge to purchase, often neglecting themselves and their loved ones in the process. Additionally, the consumption objects are often discarded or left unused, exacerbating unnecessary waste and the development of debt.

Taking this discussion a bit further, the literature addresses compulsive consumption as synonymous with addiction (Elliot 1994; Faber and O'Guinn 2008; Hirschman 1992; Scherhorn 1990). While compulsive purchasing is emphasized throughout this paper, it is also important to note the consequences of alternative behavioral addictions, such as gambling. The transition model proposed in this paper may shed some light on both the development of addiction and the recognition of potentially addiction-forming behaviors. The extant literature on compulsive consumption does a very thorough job evaluating the drivers of addiction (Elliot 1994; Hirschman 1992; Scherhorn 1990); however, minimal connection has been made between addiction and impulsive consumption. While there is some mention of impulsiveness as a trait existent within addicted consumers, there is no apparent exploration as to how these impulsive behaviors drive the development of compulsivity.

With the knowledge put forth in this manuscript, it is fair to suggest that recognizing the signs of progression into compulsive behaviors can not only save hardship, but also can save lives. Using this information, consumers will be able to recognize certain patterns developing in their lives (e.g., an intensely developed interest in purchasing a certain good), and their families will be able to notice disturbing behaviors as well. Family members may be able to notice peculiar consumption behaviors (e.g., the development of mood swings from the sudden increase and subsequent decrease in positive affective emotions) and take action before it becomes too late and the addiction takes hold both physically and psychologically.

It is an undeniable part of human nature to have feelings of both happiness and sadness. Events that occur in our lives create a myriad of emotions that we, as



consumers, must deal with on a day to day basis. Some consumers, however, lack both the emotional and cognitive ability to properly handle certain emotional states. Striving to feel pleasure, some individuals purchase items impulsively, generating happiness from physical objects. Even further, compulsive consumers utilize the pleasure derived from the shopping experience to escape pain and quickly evade negative emotions. While these negative emotions disappear for a brief moment of pleasure, the underlying problems eventually reemerge creating a cyclical behavioral stream. It is the goal of this paper to connect these two phenomena into a causal linkage explaining how some consumers behaving impulsively are at risk for compulsivity and to understand the nature of desire at play within this proposed model. Further research should investigate ways to prevent a consumer from progressing through this transitional process. Preventing compulsive behavior before it starts cannot only prevent substantial financial hardship, but can provide at-risk consumers with a chance to avoid self-destructive behaviors that not only affect their lives, but the lives of those around them.

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## APPENDIX

### MEASURES

#### Buying Impulsiveness (Rook and Fisher 1995)

Scale Items Anchored by 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 5 = “Strongly Agree”

1. I often buy things spontaneously.
2. “Just do it” describes the way I buy things.
3. I often buy things without thinking.
4. “I see it, I buy it” describes me.
5. “Buy now, think about it later” describes me.
6. Sometimes I feel like buying things on the spur-of-the-moment.
7. I buy things according to how I feel at the moment.
8. I carefully plan most of my purchases. (reverse coded)
9. Sometimes I am a bit reckless about what I buy.

#### Compulsive Buying (Faber and O’Guinn 1992)

Scale Item Anchored by 1 = “Strongly Agree” and 5 = “Strongly Disagree”

1. If I have any money left at the end of the pay period, I just have to spend it.

Scale Items Anchored by 1 = “Very Often” and 5 = “Never”

2. Felt others would be horrified if they knew of my spending habits.
3. Bought things even though I couldn’t afford them.
4. Wrote a check when I knew I didn’t have enough money in the bank to cover it.
5. Bought myself something in order to make myself feel better.
6. Felt anxious or nervous on days I didn’t go shopping.
7. Made only the minimum payments on my credit card.

#### PANAS (Positive Affect) (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988)

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way after your most recent unplanned and spontaneous purchase. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
Very slightly	a little	moderately	quite a bit	extremely
Or not at all				

_____ interested	_____ irritable
_____ distressed	_____ alert
_____ excited	_____ ashamed
_____ upset	_____ inspired
_____ strong	_____ nervous
_____ guilty	_____ determined

_____ scared	_____ attentive
_____ hostile	_____ jittery
_____ enthusiastic	_____ active
_____ proud	_____ afraid

#### Consumer Spending Self-Control (Haws, Bearden and Nenkov 2012)

Scale Items Anchored by 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 7 = “Strongly Agree”

1. I closely monitor my spending behavior.
2. I am able to work effectively toward long term financial goals.
3. I carefully consider my needs before making purchases.
4. I often delay taking action until I have carefully considered the consequences of my purchase decisions.
5. When I go out with friends, I keep track of what I am spending.
6. I am able to resist temptation in order to achieve my budget goals.
7. I know when to say when regarding how much I spend.
8. In social situations, I am generally aware of what I am spending.
9. Having objectives related to spending is important to me.
10. I am responsible when it comes to how much I spend.

#### Compulsive Buying (Ridgway, Kukar-Kinney, and Monroe 2008)

Scale Items Anchored by 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 7 = “Strongly Agree”

1. My closet has unopened shopping bags in it.
2. Others might consider me a ‘shopaholic.’
3. Much of my life centers around buying things.
4. I buy things I don’t need.
5. I buy things I did not plan to buy.
6. I consider myself an impulse purchaser.

#### Consumer Shopping Desire (New Scale)

Scale Items Anchored by 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 5 = “Strongly Agree”

##### Experience-Focused Desire

1. I want to go shopping to be a part of the environment.
2. I would describe myself as passionate about shopping.
3. I often experience a strong desire to go shopping.

##### Object-Focused Desire

4. Even if I buy items that weren’t on my shopping list, I get pleasure out of them anyway.
5. I get excited about items I purchased, even if I didn’t originally plan on buying anything.
6. I don’t mind that I buy impulsively because I enjoy the products I end up with.

